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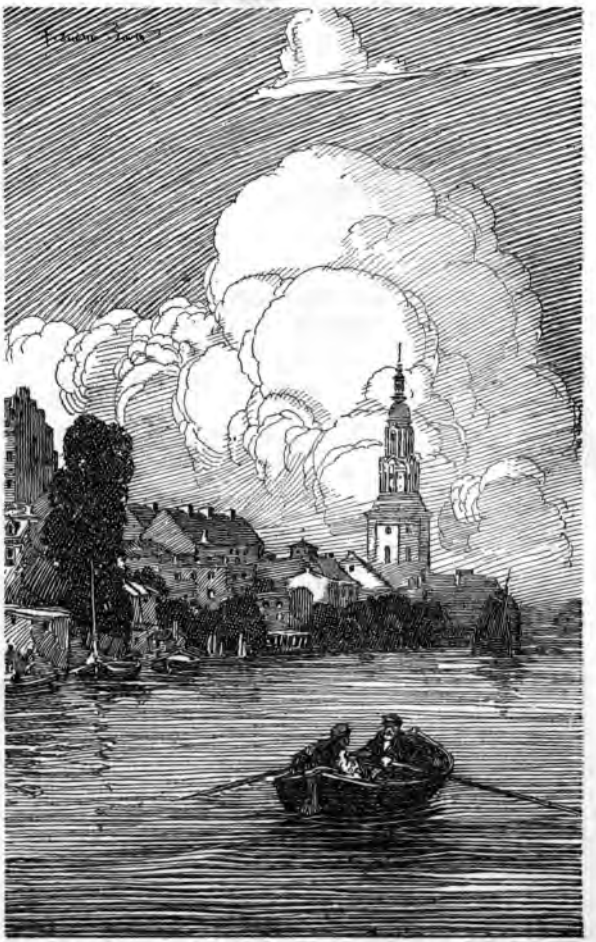
VIEW OF POTSDAM, WHERE
STORM LIVED



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GERMAN FICTION

J W VON GOETHE
GOTTFRIED KELLER
THEODOR FONTANE
THEODOR STORM

EDITED WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTIONS
BY WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON Ph D

P F COLLIER & SON
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THE NOVEL IN GERMANY

THE fact that newspaper reporters commonly call their articles "stories" points to a certain analogy between the novel and the newspaper. Even when prose fiction aims to be a fine art, it readily takes on a journalistic character; it is usually designed for immediate effect—at the concomitant risk of producing no other—and it easily passes from hand to hand or from country to country. In our day prose fiction is almost an international phenomenon: novels of a high degree of popularity are immediately translated and promptly imitated in the most distant quarters of the globe.

In the universal give and take of literary commodities Germany has played her part and, from time to time at least, has been in no wise a debtor nation; but she has more often followed than led along new paths, making up in thoroughness what she lacked in originality, and a superficial history of the German novel would be little more than a record of how successive foreign influences were turned to account in domestic production. Thus, in the eighteenth century such sorrows as those of Werther would doubtless have found some form of expression, but Goethe could not have expressed them as he did without the example of Rousseau and Richardson. Wieland and Jean Paul Richter are inconceivable without Fielding and Sterne. In the nineteenth century the epochs of German novel-writing are marked by the times when Scott, Dickens, Balzac, Dumas, Sue, George Sand, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Björnson, Turgenev, Zola, or some other foreigner, happened for the moment to be most conspicuous on the literary horizon. During the century that lies between Goethe and Hauptmann there is hardly a German novelist who has invited imitation abroad. It is in the lyric poem that the Germans have excelled, and in the drama and the opera that they have scored their international successes.

The history of the German novel would have, however, also to record that those writers have secured the most permanent distinction who have most significantly modified in their own way the suggestions which foreign examples gave them, and that the greatest distinction of all belongs to writers whom we can, if we will, associate with one or another of the main currents, but who are by no means carried away by it. In the work of these men the national character of the German novel, if it has a national character, ought to be discoverable.

For two reasons it is a fair question whether the German novel has a national character. In the first place, modern Germany has been a nation only since 1871; and in the second place, only in times of some great crisis does there appear to be in Germany a national life, as we understand the term. At other times life in Germany is urban, provincial, or private, in those aspects of existence which the Germans most prize. The imperial capital affects to represent Germany as London represents England and Paris represents France; but such ascendancy is stoutly denied Berlin in the capitals of the other states, and Saxons or Bavarians refuse to submit to Prussian hegemony in any other than political and military affairs. In literature Prussia is not the nation; the empire itself is a federation of states, and Berlin is less specifically a German city than any other in the realm. Germany is emphatically *e pluribus*. Still, there may be some bond of union stronger than political alliance, some fundamental quality common to Prussian, Saxon, and Bavarian. In this we should seek the national character. We should find the national character depicted in the historical novel, which has had a great vogue in Germany; but we may discern it also in the fiction devoted to the problems of contemporary life.

It was Goethe's opinion that the hero of a novel should be passive, and so eminently dramatic a genius as Hebbel declared that the important thing for us to observe in any individual is not how he makes his mark in the world, but how the world makes its marks upon him. These views, synonymous in meaning, but uttered by men as different, one from the other, as two Germans could very well be, may

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These facts account for certain peculiarities of form in German fiction which to us seem like defects. It generally takes a German novelist a long while to get under way, and he generally appears to move in spirals. He invites us to tarry and survey the scenery—to which his hero is wont to be more sensitive than we are—and he tends to elaborate episodes, which serve indeed to bring out qualities in his persons, but which, an impatient reader would say, delay the action. Evidently, it is not the action about which the author primarily cares. But the German novelist has

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Sentimentality and whimsicality are apt to strike one as the most prominent traits of any art that aims at what is characteristic and individual, rather than at what is typical and broadly representative. The Germans are individualists. They can cooperate efficiently with their fellow Germans, but each insists upon being himself. The German novelist will surely treat by preference a character of notable peculiarity, and if he writes many novels, he will try to give a conspectus of the qualities of the stock to which he belongs. Thus Reuter presents many characteristic figures taken from Mecklenburg; Ludwig from Thuringia; Auerbach from the Black Forest; Gotthelf, Keller, and Zahn from Switzerland; Fontane from Brandenburg; Storm and Frenssen from Schleswig-Holstein. So strong is this tendency that the Germans have a special name for this kind of art; they call it *Heimatkunst*, a word which may be translated "art of the native heath." If the author is a humorist, like Reuter or Keller, he will successfully recommend his whimsical creations to our indulgent esteem; or if he is a discriminating lover of mankind, like Ludwig, he will reconcile us even to the supersensitiveness of a narrow-minded but noble-hearted slater. The danger incurred by writers without humor and without discrimination is that their creations shall seem boorish or lachrymose.

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The German novel after Goethe followed his lead. The idea of education by experience, and the idea of the symbolical presentation of the inexplicable background of life, give to some of the greatest examples of prose fiction of the nineteenth century—such as Mörike's "Maler Nolten," Keller's "Grüner Heinrich," and Spielhagen's "Problematische Naturen"—this Goethean, Romantic picturesqueness. If the heroes are seldom great public characters and the background of their lives does not always suggest relations with illimitable space, these facts find their explanation in the German proneness to particularism.

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There are, then, some national traits in German prose fiction taken by and large. The Germans cannot vie with the English as writers of stories long or short. They have, however, much more to offer than has yet been widely circulated. During the past forty years the world has marveled at their achievements in the multifarious departments of active life. Nevertheless, their highest ideal is not doing, but being; and this being is faithfully reflected in their novels and tales.

W. G. H.

THE SORROWS OF WERTHER

BY

J. W. VON GOETHE

TRANSLATED BY

BAYARD TAYLOR

CRITICISM AND INTERPRETATION

By Thomas Carlyle

BY degrees, however, after not a little suffering in many hard contests with himself and his circumstances, Goethe began to emerge from these troubles: light dawned on his course; and his true destination, a life of literature, became more and more plain to him. His first efforts were crowned with a success well calculated to confirm him in such purposes. "Götz von Berlichingen," an historical drama of the Feudal Ages, appeared in 1773; by the originality both of its subject and its execution, attracting the public eye to the young author: and next year his "Sorrows of Werter" rose like a literary meteor on the world; and carried his name on its blazing wings, not only over Germany, but into the remotest corners of Europe. The chief incident of this work had been suggested by a tragical catastrophe, which had occurred in his neighbourhood, during a residence at Wetzlar: the emotions and delineations which give life to it; the vague impassioned longing, the moody melancholy, the wayward love and indignation, the soft feeling and the stern philosophy, which characterize the hero, he had drawn from his own past or actual experience.

The works just mentioned, though noble specimens of youthful talent, are still not so much distinguished by their intrinsic merits, as by their splendid fortune. It would be difficult to name two books which have exercised a deeper influence on the subsequent literature of Europe than these two performances of a young author; his first fruits, the produce of his twenty-fourth year. "Werter" appeared to seize the hearts of men in all quarters of the world, and to utter for them the word which they had long been waiting to hear. As usually happens, too, this same word once

uttered was soon abundantly repeated; spoken in all dialects, and chanted through all the notes of the gamut, till at length the sound of it had grown a weariness rather than a pleasure. Sceptical sentimentality, view-hunting, love, friendship, suicide, and desperation, became the staple of literary ware; and though the epidemic, after a long course of years, subsided in Germany, it reappeared with various modifications in other countries; and everywhere abundant traces of its good and bad effects are still to be discerned. . . .

But overlooking these spiritual genealogies, which bring little certainty and little profit, it may be sufficient to observe of "Berlichingen" and "Werter," that they stand prominent among the causes, or, at the very least, among the signals, of a great change in modern Literature. The former directed men's attention with a new force to the picturesque effects of the Past; and the latter, for the first time, attempted the more accurate delineation of a class of feelings, deeply important to modern minds; but for which our elder poetry offered no exponent, and perhaps could offer none, because they are feelings that arise from passion incapable of being converted into action, and belong chiefly to an age as indolent, cultivated, and unbelieving, as our own. This, notwithstanding the dash of falsehood which may exist in "Werter" itself, and the boundless delirium of extravagance which it called forth in others, is a high praise which cannot justly be denied it.—From "German Romance" (1827).

THE SORROWS OF WERTHER

BOOK I

MAY 4.

HOW happy I am that I am gone! My dear friend, what a thing is the heart of man! To leave you, from whom I have been inseparable, whom I love so dearly, and yet to feel happy! I know you will forgive me. Have not other attachments been specially appointed by fate to torment a head like mine? Poor Leonora! and yet I was not to blame. Was it my fault, that, whilst the peculiar charms of her sister afforded me an agreeable entertainment, a passion for me was engendered in her feeble heart? And yet am I wholly blameless? Did I not encourage her emotions? Did I not feel charmed at those truly genuine expressions of nature, which, though but little mirthful in reality, so often amused us? Did I not —but oh! what is man, that he dares so to accuse himself? My dear friend, I promise you I will improve; I will no longer, as has ever been my habit, continue to ruminate on every petty vexation which fortune may dispense; I will enjoy the present, and the past shall be for me the past. No doubt you are right, my best of friends, there would be far less suffering amongst mankind, if men—and God knows why they are so fashioned—did not employ their imaginations so assiduously in recalling the memory of past sorrow, instead of bearing their present lot with equanimity.

Be kind enough to inform my mother that I shall attend to her business to the best of my ability, and shall give her the earliest information about it. I have seen my aunt, and find that she is very far from being the disagreeable person our friends allege her to be. She is a lively, cheerful woman, with the best of hearts. I explained to her my mother's wrongs with regard to that part of her portion which has been withheld from her. She told me the motives

and reasons of her own conduct, and the terms on which she is willing to give up the whole, and to do more than we have asked. In short, I cannot write further upon this subject at present; only assure my mother that all will go on well. And I have again observed, my dear friend, in this trifling affair, that misunderstandings and neglect occasion more mischief in the world than even malice and wickedness. At all events, the two latter are of less frequent occurrence.

In other respects I am very well off here. Solitude in this terrestrial paradise is a genial balm to my mind, and the young spring cheers with its bounteous promises my oftentimes misgiving heart. Every tree, every bush, is full of flowers; and one might wish himself transformed into a butterfly, to float about in this ocean of perfume, and find his whole existence in it.

The town itself is disagreeable; but then, all around, you find an inexpressible beauty of Nature. This induced the late Count M—— to lay out a garden on one of the sloping hills which here intersect each other with the most charming variety, and form the most lovely valleys. The garden is simple; and it is easy to perceive, even upon your first entrance, that the plan was not designed by a scientific gardener, but by a man who wished to give himself up here to the enjoyment of his own sensitive heart. Many a tear have I already shed to the memory of its departed master in a summer-house which is now reduced to ruins, but was his favourite resort, and now is mine. I shall soon be master of the place. The gardener has become attached to me within the last few days, and he will lose nothing thereby.

MAY 10.

A wonderful serenity has taken possession of my entire soul, like these sweet mornings of spring which I enjoy with my whole heart. I am alone, and feel the charm of existence in this spot, which was created for the bliss of souls like mine. I am so happy, my dear friend, so absorbed in the exquisite sense of mere tranquil existence, that I neglect my talents. I should be incapable of draw-

ing a single stroke at the present moment; and yet I feel that I never was a greater artist than now. When, while the lovely valley teems with vapour around me, and the meridian sun strikes the upper surface of the impenetrable foliage of my trees, and but a few stray gleams steal into the inner sanctuary, I throw myself down among the tall grass by the trickling stream; and as I lie close to the earth, a thousand unknown plants are noticed by me: when I hear the buzz of the little world among the stalks, and grow familiar with the countless indescribable forms of the insects and flies, then I feel the presence of the Almighty, who formed us in his own image, and the breath of that universal love which bears and sustains us, as it floats around us in an eternity of bliss; and then, my friend, when darkness overspreads my eyes, and heaven and earth seem to dwell in my soul and absorb its power, like the form of a beloved mistress,—then I often think with longing, Oh, would I could describe these conceptions, could impress upon paper all that is living so full and warm within me, that it might be the mirror of my soul, as my soul is the mirror of the infinite God! O my friend—but it is too much for my strength—I sink under the weight of the splendour of these visions!

MAY 12.

I know not whether some deceitful spirits haunt this spot, or whether it be the warm, celestial fancy in my own heart which makes everything around me seem like paradise. In front of the house is a fountain,—a fountain to which I am bound by a charm like Melusina and her sisters. Descending a gentle slope, you come to an arch, where, some twenty steps lower down, water of the clearest crystal gushes from the marble rock. The narrow wall which encloses it above, the tall trees which encircle the spot, and the coolness of the place itself,—everything imparts a pleasant but sublime impression. Not a day passes on which I do not spend an hour there. The young maidens come from the town to fetch water,—innocent and necessary employment, and formerly the occupation of the daughters of kings. As I take my rest there, the idea of the old

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TRANSLATED BY

BAYARD TAYLOR

CRITICISM AND INTERPRETATION

By Thomas Carlyle

BY degrees, however, after not a little suffering in many hard contests with himself and his circumstances, Goethe began to emerge from these troubles: light dawned on his course; and his true destination, a life of literature, became more and more plain to him. His first efforts were crowned with a success well calculated to confirm him in such purposes. "Götz von Berlichingen," an historical drama of the Feudal Ages, appeared in 1773; by the originality both of its subject and its execution, attracting the public eye to the young author: and next year his "Sorrows of Werter" rose like a literary meteor on the world; and carried his name on its blazing wings, not only over Germany, but into the remotest corners of Europe. The chief incident of this work had been suggested by a tragical catastrophe, which had occurred in his neighbourhood, during a residence at Wetzlar: the emotions and delineations which give life to it; the vague impassioned longing, the moody melancholy, the wayward love and indignation, the soft feeling and the stern philosophy, which characterize the hero, he had drawn from his own past or actual experience.

The works just mentioned, though noble specimens of youthful talent, are still not so much distinguished by their intrinsic merits, as by their splendid fortune. It would be difficult to name two books which have exercised a deeper influence on the subsequent literature of Europe than these two performances of a young author; his first fruits, the produce of his twenty-fourth year. "Werter" appeared to seize the hearts of men in all quarters of the world, and to utter for them the word which they had long been waiting to hear. As usually happens, too, this same word once

uttered was soon abundantly repeated: spoken in all dialects, and chanted through all the notes of the gamut, till at length the sound of it had grown a weariness rather than a pleasure. Sceptical sentimentality, view-hunting, love, friendship, suicide, and desperation, became the staple of literary ware: and though the epidemic, after a long course of years, subsided in Germany, it reappeared with various modifications in other countries: and everywhere abundant traces of its good and bad effects are still to be discerned. . . .

But overlooking these spiritual genealogies, which bring little certainty and little profit, it may be sufficient to observe of "Berlichingen" and "Werter," that they stand prominent among the causes, or, at the very least, among the signals, of a great change in modern Literature. The former directed men's attention with a new force to the picturesque effects of the Past; and the latter, for the first time, attempted the more accurate delineation of a class of feelings, deeply important to modern minds; but for which our elder poetry offered no exponent, and perhaps could offer none, because they are feelings that arise from passion incapable of being converted into action, and belong chiefly to an age as indolent, cultivated, and unbelieving, as our own. This, notwithstanding the dash of falsehood which may exist in "Werter" itself, and the boundless delirium of extravagance which it called forth in others, is a high praise which cannot justly be denied it.—From "German Romance" (1827).

THE SORROWS OF WERTHER

BOOK I

MAY 4.

HOW happy I am that I am gone! My dear friend, what a thing is the heart of man! To leave you, from whom I have been inseparable, whom I love so dearly, and yet to feel happy! I know you will forgive me. Have not other attachments been specially appointed by fate to torment a head like mine? Poor Leonora! and yet I was not to blame. Was it my fault, that, whilst the peculiar charms of her sister afforded me an agreeable entertainment, a passion for me was engendered in her feeble heart? And yet am I wholly blameless? Did I not encourage her emotions? Did I not feel charmed at those truly genuine expressions of nature, which, though but little mirthful in reality, so often amused us? Did I not —but oh! what is man, that he dares so to accuse himself? My dear friend, I promise you I will improve; I will no longer, as has ever been my habit, continue to ruminate on every petty vexation which fortune may dispense; I will enjoy the present, and the past shall be for me the past. No doubt you are right, my best of friends, there would be far less suffering amongst mankind, if men—and God knows why they are so fashioned—did not employ their imaginations so assiduously in recalling the memory of past sorrow, instead of bearing their present lot with equanimity.

Be kind enough to inform my mother that I shall attend to her business to the best of my ability, and shall give her the earliest information about it. I have seen my aunt, and find that she is very far from being the disagreeable person our friends allege her to be. She is a lively, cheerful woman, with the best of hearts. I explained to her my mother's wrongs with regard to that part of her portion which has been withheld from her. She told me the motives

and reasons of her own conduct, and the terms on which she is willing to give up the whole, and to do more than we have asked. In short, I cannot write further upon this subject at present; only assure my mother that all will go on well. And I have again observed, my dear friend, in this trifling affair, that misunderstandings and neglect occasion more mischief in the world than even malice and wickedness. At all events, the two latter are of less frequent occurrence.

In other respects I am very well off here. Solitude in this terrestrial paradise is a genial balm to my mind, and the young spring cheers with its bounteous promises my oftentimes misgiving heart. Every tree, every bush, is full of flowers; and one might wish himself transformed into a butterfly, to float about in this ocean of perfume, and find his whole existence in it.

The town itself is disagreeable; but then, all around, you find an inexpressible beauty of Nature. This induced the late Count M—— to lay out a garden on one of the sloping hills which here intersect each other with the most charming variety, and form the most lovely valleys. The garden is simple; and it is easy to perceive, even upon your first entrance, that the plan was not designed by a scientific gardener, but by a man who wished to give himself up here to the enjoyment of his own sensitive heart. Many a tear have I already shed to the memory of its departed master in a summer-house which is now reduced to ruins, but was his favourite resort, and now is mine. I shall soon be master of the place. The gardener has become attached to me within the last few days, and he will lose nothing thereby.

MAY 10.

A wonderful serenity has taken possession of my entire soul, like these sweet mornings of spring which I enjoy with my whole heart. I am alone, and feel the charm of existence in this spot, which was created for the bliss of souls like mine. I am so happy, my dear friend, so absorbed in the exquisite sense of mere tranquil existence, that I neglect my talents. I should be incapable of draw-

ing a single stroke at the present moment; and yet I feel that I never was a greater artist than now. When, while the lovely valley teems with vapour around me, and the meridian sun strikes the upper surface of the impenetrable foliage of my trees, and but a few stray gleams steal into the inner sanctuary, I throw myself down among the tall grass by the trickling stream; and as I lie close to the earth, a thousand unknown plants are noticed by me: when I hear the buzz of the little world among the stalks, and grow familiar with the countless indescribable forms of the insects and flies, then I feel the presence of the Almighty, who formed us in his own image, and the breath of that universal love which bears and sustains us, as it floats around us in an eternity of bliss; and then, my friend, when darkness overspreads my eyes, and heaven and earth seem to dwell in my soul and absorb its power, like the form of a beloved mistress,—then I often think with longing, Oh, would I could describe these conceptions, could impress upon paper all that is living so full and warm within me, that it might be the mirror of my soul, as my soul is the mirror of the infinite God! O my friend—but it is too much for my strength—I sink under the weight of the splendour of these visions!

MAY 12.

I know not whether some deceitful spirits haunt this spot, or whether it be the warm, celestial fancy in my own heart which makes everything around me seem like paradise. In front of the house is a fountain,—a fountain to which I am bound by a charm like Melusina and her sisters. Descending a gentle slope, you come to an arch, where, some twenty steps lower down, water of the clearest crystal gushes from the marble rock. The narrow wall which encloses it above, the tall trees which encircle the spot, and the coolness of the place itself,—everything imparts a pleasant but sublime impression. Not a day passes on which I do not spend an hour there. The young maidens come from the town to fetch water,—innocent and necessary employment, and formerly the occupation of the daughters of kings. As I take my rest there, the idea of the old

patriarchal life is awakened around me. I see them, our old ancestors, how they formed their friendships and contracted alliances at the fountain-side; and I feel how fountains and streams were guarded by beneficent spirits. He who is a stranger to these sensations has never really enjoyed cool repose at the side of a fountain after the fatigue of a weary summer day.

MAY 13.

You ask if you shall send me books. My dear friend, I beseech you, for the love of God, relieve me from such a yoke! I need no more to be guided, agitated, heated. My heart ferments sufficiently of itself. I want strains to lull me, and I find them to perfection in my Homer. Often do I strive to allay the burning fever of my blood; and you have never witnessed anything so unsteady, so uncertain, as my heart. But need I confess this to you, my dear friend, who have so often endured the anguish of witnessing my sudden transitions from sorrow to immoderate joy, and from sweet melancholy to violent passions? I treat my poor heart like a sick child, and gratify its every fancy. Do not mention this again: there are people who would censure me for it.

MAY 15.

The common people of the place know me already, and love me, particularly the children. When at first I associated with them, and inquired in a friendly tone about their various trifles, some fancied that I wished to ridicule them, and turned from me in exceeding ill-humour. I did not allow that circumstance to grieve me: I only felt most keenly what I have often before observed. Persons who can claim a certain rank keep themselves coldly aloof from the common people, as though they feared to lose their importance by the contact; whilst wanton idlers, and such as are prone to bad joking, affect to descend to their level, only to make the poor people feel their impertinence all the more keenly.

I know very well that we are not all equal, nor can be so; but it is my opinion that he who avoids the common people,

in order not to lose their respect, is as much to blame as a coward who hides himself from his enemy because he fears defeat.

The other day I went to the fountain, and found a young servant-girl, who had set her pitcher on the lowest step, and looked round to see if one of her companions was approaching to place it on her head. I ran down, and looked at her. "Shall I help you, pretty lass?" said I. She blushed deeply. "Oh, sir!" she exclaimed. "No ceremony!" I replied. She adjusted her head-gear, and I helped her. She thanked me, and ascended the steps.

MAY 17.

I have made all sorts of acquaintances, but have as yet found no society. I know not what attraction I possess for the people, so many of them like me, and attach themselves to me; and then I feel sorry when the road we pursue together goes only a short distance. If you inquire what the people are like here, I must answer, "The same as everywhere." The human race is but a monotonous affair. Most of them labour the greater part of their time for mere subsistence; and the scanty portion of freedom which remains to them so troubles them that they use every exertion to get rid of it. Oh, the destiny of man!

But they are a right good sort of people. If I occasionally forget myself, and take part in the innocent pleasures which are not yet forbidden to the peasantry, and enjoy myself, for instance, with genuine freedom and sincerity, round a well-covered table, or arrange an excursion or a dance opportunely, and so forth, all this produces a good effect upon my disposition; only I must forget that there lie dormant within me so many other qualities which moulder uselessly, and which I am obliged to keep carefully concealed. Ah! this thought affects my spirits fearfully. And yet to be misunderstood is the fate of the like of us.

Alas, that the friend of my youth is gone! Alas, that I ever knew her! I might say to myself, "You are a dreamer to seek what is not to be found here below." But she has been mine. I have possessed that heart, that noble soul, in whose presence I seemed to be more than I really

was, because I was all that I could be. Good heavens! did then a single power of my soul remain unexercised? In her presence could I not display, to its full extent, that mysterious feeling with which my heart embraces Nature? Was not our intercourse a perpetual web of the finest emotions, of the keenest wit, the varieties of which, even in their very eccentricity, bore the stamp of genius? Alas! the few years by which she was my senior brought her to the grave before me. Never can I forget her firm mind or her heavenly patience.

A few days ago I met a certain young V——, a frank, open fellow, with a most pleasing countenance. He has just left the university, does not deem himself over-wise, but believes he knows more than other people. He has worked hard, as I can perceive from many circumstances, and, in short, possesses a large stock of information. When he heard that I am drawing a good deal, and that I know Greek (two wonderful things for this part of the country), he came to see me, and displayed his whole store of learning, from Batteaux to Wood, from De Piles to Winkelmann: he assured me he had read through the first part of Sultzer's theory, and also possessed a manuscript of Heyne's work on the study of the antique. I allowed it all to pass.

I have become acquainted, also, with a very worthy person, the district judge, a frank and open-hearted man. I am told it is a most delightful thing to see him in the midst of his children, of whom he has nine. His eldest daughter especially is highly spoken of. He has invited me to go and see him, and I intend to do so on the first opportunity. He lives at one of the royal hunting-lodges, which can be reached from here in an hour and a half by walking, and which he obtained leave to inhabit after the loss of his wife, as it is so painful to him to reside in town and at the court.

There have also come in my way a few other originals of a questionable sort, who are in all respects undesirable, and most intolerable in their demonstrations of friendship. Good-by. This letter will please you; it is quite historical.

MAY 22.

That the life of man is but a dream, many a man has surmised heretofore; and I, too, am everywhere pursued by this feeling. When I consider the narrow limits within which our active and inquiring faculties are confined; when I see how all our energies are wasted in providing for mere necessities, which again have no further end than to prolong a wretched existence; and then that all our satisfaction concerning certain subjects of investigation ends in nothing better than a passive resignation, whilst we amuse ourselves painting our prison-walls with bright figures and brilliant landscapes,—when I consider all this, Wilhelm, I am silent. I examine my own being, and find there a world, but a world rather of imagination and dim desires, than of distinctness and living power. Then everything swims before my senses, and I smile and dream while pursuing my way through the world.

All learned professors and doctors are agreed that children do not comprehend the cause of their desires; but that the grown-up should wander about this earth like children, without knowing whence they come, or whither they go, influenced as little by fixed motives, but guided like them by biscuits, sugar-plums, and the rod,—this is what nobody is willing to acknowledge; and yet I think it is palpable.

I know what you will say in reply; for I am ready to admit that they are happiest, who, like children, amuse themselves with their play-things, dress and undress their dolls, and attentively watch the cupboard, where mamma has locked up her sweet things, and, when at last they get a delicious morsel, eat it greedily, and exclaim, "More!" These are certainly happy beings; but others also are objects of envy, who dignify their paltry employments, and sometimes even their passions, with pompous titles, representing them to mankind as gigantic achievements performed for their welfare and glory. But the man who humbly acknowledges the vanity of all this, who observes with what pleasure the thriving citizen converts his little garden into a paradise, and how patiently even the poor man pursues his weary way under his burden, and how all wish equally to behold the light of the sun a little longer,—yes, such a man is at

peace, and creates his own world within himself; and he is also happy, because he is a man. And then, however limited his sphere, he still preserves in his bosom the sweet feeling of liberty, and knows that he can quit his prison whenever he likes.

MAY 26.

You know of old my ways of settling anywhere, of selecting a little cottage in some cosey spot, and of putting up in it with every inconvenience. Here, too, I have discovered such a snug, comfortable place, which possesses peculiar charms for me.

About a league from the town is a place called Walheim.[1] It is delightfully situated on the side of a hill; and by proceeding along one of the footpaths which lead out of the village, you can have a view of the whole valley. A good old woman lives there, who keeps a small inn. She sells wine, beer, and coffee, and is cheerful and pleasant notwithstanding her age. The chief charm of this spot consists in two linden-trees, spreading their enormous branches over the little green before the church, which is entirely surrounded by peasants' cottages, barns, and homesteads. I have seldom seen a place so retired and peaceable; and there often have my table and chair brought out from the little inn, and drink my coffee there, and read my Homer. Accident brought me to the spot one fine afternoon, and I found it perfectly deserted. Everybody was in the fields except a little boy about four years of age, who was sitting on the ground, and held between his knees a child about six months old; he pressed it to his bosom with both arms, which thus formed a sort of armchair; and notwithstanding the liveliness which sparkled in its black eyes, it remained perfectly still. The sight charmed me. I sat down upon a plough opposite, and sketched with great delight this little picture of brotherly tenderness. I added the neighbouring hedge, the barn-door, and some broken cart-wheels, just as they happened to lie; and I found in about an hour that I had made a very correct and interesting drawing, without

[1] The reader need not take the trouble to look for the place thus designated. We have found it necessary to change the names given in the original.

putting in the slightest thing of my own. This confirmed me in my resolution of adhering, for the future, entirely to Nature. She alone is inexhaustible, and capable of forming the greatest masters. Much may be alleged in favour of rules; as much may be likewise advanced in favour of the laws of society: an artist formed upon them will never produce anything absolutely bad or disgusting; as a man who observes the laws and obeys decorum can never be an absolutely intolerable neighbour nor a decided villain: but yet, say what you will of rules, they destroy the genuine feeling of Nature, as well as its true expression. Do not tell me "that this is too hard, that they only restrain and prune superfluous branches, etc." My good friend, I will illustrate this by an analogy. These things resemble love. A warm-hearted youth becomes strongly attached to a maiden: he spends every hour of the day in her company, wears out his health, and lavishes his fortune, to afford continual proof that he is wholly devoted to her. Then comes a man of the world, a man of place and respectability, and addresses him thus: "My good young friend, love is natural; but you must love within bounds. Divide your time: devote a portion to business, and give the hours of recreation to your mistress. Calculate your fortune; and out of the superfluity you may make her a present, only not too often,—on her birthday, and such occasions." Pursuing this advice, he may become a useful member of society, and I should advise every prince to give him an appointment; but it is all up with his love, and with his genius if he be an artist. O my friend! why is it that the torrent of genius so seldom bursts forth, so seldom rolls in full-flowing stream, overwhelming your astounded soul? Because, on either side of this stream, cold and respectable persons have taken up their abodes, and, forsooth, their summer-houses and tulip-beds would suffer from the torrent; wherefore they dig trenches, and raise embankments betimes, in order to avert the impending danger.

MAY 27.

I find I have fallen into raptures, declamation, and similes, and have forgotten, in consequence, to tell you what became

of the children. Absorbed in my artistic contemplations, which I briefly described in my letter of yesterday, I continued sitting on the plough for two hours. Towards evening a young woman, with a basket on her arm, came running towards the children, who had not moved all that time. She exclaimed from a distance, "You are a good boy, Philip!" She gave me greeting: I returned it, rose, and approached her. I inquired if she were the mother of those pretty children. "Yes," she said; and, giving the eldest a piece of bread, she took the little one in her arms and kissed it with a mother's tenderness. "I left my child in Philip's care," she said, "whilst I went into the town with my eldest boy to buy some wheaten bread, some sugar, and an earthen pot." I saw the various articles in the basket, from which the cover had fallen. "I shall make some broth to-night for my little Hans (which was the name of the youngest): that wild fellow, the big one, broke my pot yesterday, whilst he was scrambling with Philip for what remained of the contents." I inquired for the eldest; and she had scarcely time to tell me that he was driving a couple of geese home from the meadow, when he ran up, and handed Philip an osier-twig. I talked a little longer with the woman, and found that she was the daughter of the schoolmaster, and that her husband was gone on a journey into Switzerland for some money a relation had left him. "They wanted to cheat him," she said, "and would not answer his letters; so he is gone there himself. I hope he has met with no accident, as I have heard nothing of him since his departure." I left the woman with regret, giving each of the children a kreutzer, with an additional one for the youngest, to buy some wheaten bread for his broth when she went to town next; and so we parted.

I assure you, my dear friend, when my thoughts are all in tumult, the sight of such a creature as this tranquillises my disturbed mind. She moves in a happy thoughtlessness within the confined circle of her existence; she supplies her wants from day to day; and when she sees the leaves fall, they raise no other idea in her mind than that winter is approaching.

Since that time I have gone out there frequently. The children have become quite familiar with me; and each gets a lump of sugar when I drink my coffee, and they share my milk and bread and butter in the evening. They always receive their kreutzer on Sundays, for the good woman has orders to give it to them when I do not go there after evening service.

They are quite at home with me, tell me everything; and I am particularly amused with observing their tempers, and the simplicity of their behaviour, when some of the other village children are assembled with them.

It has given me a deal of trouble to satisfy the anxiety of the mother, lest (as she says) "they should inconvenience the gentleman."

MAY 30.

What I have lately said of painting is equally true with respect to poetry. It is only necessary for us to know what is really excellent, and venture to give it expression; and that is saying much in few words. To-day I have had a scene which, if literally related, would make the most beautiful idyl in the world. But why should I talk of poetry and scenes and idyls? Can we never take pleasure in Nature without having recourse to art?

If you expect anything grand or magnificent from this introduction, you will be sadly mistaken. It relates merely to a peasant-lad, who has excited in me the warmest interest. As usual, I shall tell my story badly; and you, as usual, will think me extravagant. It is Walheim once more —always Walheim—which produces these wonderful phenomena.

A party had assembled outside the house under the linden-trees, to drink coffee. The company did not exactly please me; and, under one pretext or another, I lingered behind.

A peasant came from an adjoining house, and set to work arranging some part of the same plough which I had lately sketched. His appearance pleased me; and I spoke to him, inquired about his circumstances, made his acquaintance, and, as is my wont with persons of that class, was soon admitted into his confidence. He said he was in the service

of a young widow, who set great store by him. He spoke so much of his mistress, and praised her so extravagantly, that I could soon see he was desperately in love with her. "She is no longer young," he said; "and she was treated so badly by her former husband that she does not mean to marry again." From his account it was so evident what incomparable charms she possessed for him, and how ardently he wished she would select him to extinguish the recollection of her first husband's misconduct, that I should have to repeat his own words in order to describe the depth of the poor fellow's attachment, truth, and devotion. It would, in fact, require the gifts of a great poet to convey the expression of his features, the harmony of his voice, and the heavenly fire of his eye. No words can portray the tenderness of his every movement and of every feature; no effort of mine could do justice to the scene. His alarm lest I should misconceive his position with regard to his mistress, or question the propriety of her conduct, touched me particularly. The charming manner with which he described her form and person, which, without possessing the graces of youth, won and attached him to her, is inexpressible, and must be left to the imagination. I have never in my life witnessed or fancied or conceived the possibility of such intense devotion, such ardent affections, united with so much purity. Do not blame me if I say that the recollection of this innocence and truth is deeply impressed upon my very soul; that this picture of fidelity and tenderness haunts me everywhere: and that my own heart, as though enkindled by the flame, glows and burns within me.

I mean now to try and see her as soon as I can: or perhaps, on second thoughts, I had better not; it is better I should behold her through the eyes of her lover. To my sight, perhaps, she would not appear as she now stands before me; and why should I destroy so sweet a picture?

JUNE 16.

"Why do I not write to you?" You lay claim to learning, and ask such a question. You should have guessed that I am well—that is to say—in a word, I have made an acquaintance who has won my heart: I have—I know not.

To give you a regular account of the manner in which I have become acquainted with the most amiable of women would be a difficult task. I am a happy and contented mortal, but a poor historian.

An angel! Nonsense! Everybody so describes his mistress; and yet I find it impossible to tell you how perfect she is, or why she is so perfect: suffice it to say she has captivated all my senses.

So much simplicity with so much understanding—so mild, and yet so resolute—a mind so placid, and a life so active.

But all this is ugly balderdash, which expresses not a single character nor feature. Some other time—but no, not some other time, now, this very instant, will I tell you all about it. Now or never. Well, between ourselves, since I commenced my letter, I have been three times on the point of throwing down my pen, of ordering my horse, and riding out. And yet I vowed this morning that I would not ride to-day, and yet every moment I am rushing to the window to see how high the sun is.

. . . . . .

I could not restrain myself—go to her I must. I have just returned, Wilhelm; and whilst I am taking supper, I will write to you. What a delight it was for my soul to see her in the midst of her dear, beautiful children,—eight brothers and sisters!

But if I proceed thus, you will be no wiser at the end of my letter than you were at the beginning. Attend, then, and I will compel myself to give you the details.

I mentioned to you the other day that I had become acquainted with S——, the district judge, and that he had invited me to go and visit him in his retirement, or rather in his little kingdom. But I neglected going, and perhaps should never have gone, if chance had not discovered to me the treasure which lay concealed in that retired spot. Some of our young people had proposed giving a ball in the country, at which I consented to be present. I offered my hand for the evening to a pretty and agreeable, but rather commonplace, sort of girl from the immediate neighbourhood; and it was agreed that I should engage a carriage, and call upon Charlotte, with my partner and her aunt, to

convey them to the ball. My companion informed me, as we drove along through the park to the hunting-lodge, that I should make the acquaintance of a very charming young lady. "Take care," added the aunt, "that you do not lose your heart." "Why?" said I. "Because she is already engaged to a very worthy man," she replied, "who is gone to settle his affairs upon the death of his father, and will succeed to a very considerable inheritance." This information possessed no interest for me. When we arrived at the gate, the sun was setting behind the tops of the mountains. The atmosphere was heavy; and the ladies expressed their fears of an approaching storm, as masses of low black clouds were gathering in the horizon. I relieved their anxieties by pretending to be weather-wise, although I myself had some apprehensions lest our pleasure should be interrupted.

I alighted; and a maid came to the door, and requested us to wait a moment for her mistress. I walked across the court to a well-built house, and, ascending the flight of steps in front, opened the door, and saw before me the most charming spectacle I had ever witnessed. Six children, from eleven to two years old, were running about the hall, and surrounding a lady of middle height, with a lovely figure, dressed in a robe of simple white, trimmed with pink ribbons. She was holding a rye loaf in her hand, and was cutting slices for the little ones all round, in proportion to their age and appetite. She performed her task in a graceful and affectionate manner; each claimant awaiting his turn with outstretched hands, and boisterously shouting his thanks. Some of them ran away at once, to enjoy their evening meal; whilst others, of a gentler disposition, retired to the courtyard to see the strangers, and to survey the carriage in which their Charlotte was to drive away. "Pray forgive me for giving you the trouble to come for me, and for keeping the ladies waiting: but dressing, and arranging some household duties before I leave, had made me forget my children's supper; and they do not like to take it from any one but me." I uttered some indifferent compliment: but my whole soul was absorbed by her air, her voice, her manner; and I had scarcely recovered myself when she ran into her room to fetch her gloves and fan. The young ones

threw inquiring glances at me from a distance; whilst I approached the youngest, a most delicious little creature. He drew back; and Charlotte, entering at the very moment, said, "Louis, shake hands with your cousin." The little fellow obeyed willingly; and I could not resist giving him a hearty kiss, notwithstanding his rather dirty face. "Cousin," said I to Charlotte, as I handed her down, "do you think I deserve the happiness of being related to you?" She replied, with a ready smile, "Oh! I have such a number of cousins that I should be sorry if you were the most undeserving of them." In taking leave, she desired her next sister, Sophy, a girl about eleven years old, to take great care of the children, and to say good-by to papa for her when he came home from his ride. She enjoined to the little ones to obey their sister Sophy as they would herself, upon which some promised that they would; but a little fair-haired girl, about six years old, looked discontented, and said, "But Sophy is not you, Charlotte; and we like you best." The two eldest boys had clambered up the carriage; and, at my request, she permitted them to accompany us a little way through the forest, upon their promising to sit very still, and hold fast.

We were hardly seated, and the ladies had scarcely exchanged compliments, making the usual remarks upon each other's dress, and upon the company they expected to meet, when Charlotte stopped the carriage, and made her brothers get down. They insisted upon kissing her hands once more; which the eldest did with all the tenderness of a youth of fifteen, but the other in a lighter and more careless manner. She desired them again to give her love to the children, and we drove off.

The aunt inquired of Charlotte whether she had finished the book she had last sent her. "No," said Charlotte; "I did not like it: you can have it again. And the one before was not much better." I was surprised, upon asking the title, to hear that it was ——.[1] I found penetration and character in everything she said: every expression seemed to brighten her features with new charms, with new rays

[1] We feel obliged to suppress the passage in the letter, to prevent any one from feeling aggrieved; although no author need pay much attention to the opinion of a mere girl, or that of an unsteady young man.

of genius, which unfolded by degrees, as she felt herself understood.

"When I was younger," she observed, "I loved nothing so much as romances. Nothing could equal my delight when, on some holiday, I could settle down quietly in a corner, and enter with my whole heart and soul into the joys or sorrows of some fictitious Leonora. I do not deny that they even possess some charms for me yet. But I read so seldom that I prefer books suited exactly to my taste. And I like those authors best whose scenes describe my own situation in life,—and the friends who are about me whose stories touch me with interest, from resembling my own homely existence,—which, without being absolutely paradise, is, on the whole, a source of indescribable happiness."

I endeavoured to conceal the emotion which these words occasioned, but it was of slight avail; for when she had expressed so truly her opinion of "The Vicar of Wakefield," and of other works, the names of which I omit,[1] I could no longer contain myself, but gave full utterance to what I thought of it; and it was not until Charlotte had addressed herself to the two other ladies, that I remembered their presence, and observed them sitting mute with astonishment. The aunt looked at me several times with an air of raillery, which, however, I did not at all mind.

We talked of the pleasures of dancing. "If it is a fault to love it," said Charlotte, "I am ready to confess that I prize it above all other amusements. If anything disturbs me, I go to the piano, play an air to which I have danced, and all goes right again directly."

You, who know me, can fancy how steadfastly I gazed upon her rich dark eyes during these remarks, how my very soul gloated over her warm lips and fresh, glowing cheeks, how I became quite lost in the delightful meaning of her words,—so much so, that I scarcely heard the actual expressions. In short, I alighted from the carriage like a person in a dream, and was so lost to the dim world around me that I scarcely heard the music which resounded from the illuminated ball-room.

[1] Though the names are omitted, yet the authors mentioned deserve Charlotte's approbation, and will feel it in their hearts when they read this passage. It concerns no other person.

The two Messrs. Andran and a certain N. N. (I cannot trouble myself with the names), who were the aunt's and Charlotte's partners, received us at the carriage-door, and took possession of their ladies, whilst I followed with mine.

We commenced with a minuet. I led out one lady after another, and precisely those who were the most disagreeable could not bring themselves to leave off. Charlotte and her partner began an English country dance, and you must imagine my delight when it was their turn to dance the figure with us.

You should see Charlotte dance. She dances with her whole heart and soul: her figure is all harmony, elegance, and grace, as if she were conscious of nothing else, and had no other thought or feeling; and, doubtless, for the moment every other sensation is extinct.

She was engaged for the second country dance, but promised me the third, and assured me, with the most agreeable freedom, that she was very fond of waltzing. "It is the custom here," she said, "for the previous partners to waltz together; but my partner is an indifferent waltzer, and will feel delighted if I save him the trouble. Your partner is not allowed to waltz, and, indeed, is equally incapable: but I observed during the country dance that you waltz well; so, if you will waltz with me, I beg you would propose it to my partner, and I will propose it to yours." We agreed, and it was arranged that our partners should mutually entertain each other.

We set off, and at first delighted ourselves with the usual graceful motions of the arms. With what grace, with what ease, she moved! When the waltz commenced, and the dancers whirled round each other in the giddy maze, there was some confusion, owing to the incapacity of some of the dancers. We judiciously remained still, allowing the others to weary themselves; and when the awkward dancers had withdrawn, we joined in, and kept it up famously together with one other couple,—Andran and his partner. Never did I dance more lightly. I felt myself more than mortal, holding this loveliest of creatures in my arms, flying with her as rapidly as the wind, till I lost sight of every

other object; and oh, Wilhelm, I vowed at that moment, that a maiden whom I loved, or for whom I felt the slightest attachment, never, never should waltz with any one else but with me, if I went to perdition for it!—you will understand this.

We took a few turns in the room to recover our breath. Charlotte sat down, and felt refreshed by partaking of some oranges which I had had secured,—the only ones that had been left; but at every slice which from politeness she offered to her neighbours, I felt as though a dagger went through my heart.

We were the second couple in the third country dance. As we were going down (and Heaven knows with what ecstasy I gazed at her arms and eyes, beaming with the sweetest feeling of pure and genuine enjoyment), we passed a lady whom I had noticed for her charming expression of countenance, although she was no longer young. She looked at Charlotte with a smile, then holding up her finger in a threatening attitude, repeated twice in a very significant tone of voice the name of "Albert."

"Who is Albert," said I to Charlotte, "if it is not impertinent to ask?" She was about to answer, when we were obliged to separate, in order to execute a figure in the dance; and as we crossed over again in front of each other, I perceived she looked somewhat pensive. "Why need I conceal it from you?" she said, as she gave me her hand for the promenade. "Albert is a worthy man, to whom I am engaged." Now, there was nothing new to me in this (for the girls had told me of it on the way); but it was so far new that I had not thought of it in connection with her whom in so short a time I had learned to prize so highly. Enough. I became confused, got out in the figure, and occasioned general confusion; so that it required all Charlotte's presence of mind to set me right by pulling and pushing me into my proper place.

The dance was not yet finished when the lightning which had for some time been seen in the horizon, and which I had asserted to proceed entirely from heat, grew more violent; and the thunder was heard above the music. When any distress or terror surprises us in the midst of our

amusements, it naturally makes a deeper impression than at other times, either because the contrast makes us more keenly susceptible, or rather perhaps because our senses are then more open to impressions, and the shock is consequently stronger. To this cause I must ascribe the fright and shrieks of the ladies. One sagaciously sat down in a corner with her back to the window, and held her fingers to her ears; a second knelt down before her, and hid her face in her lap; a third threw herself between them, and embraced her sister with a thousand tears; some insisted on going home; others, unconscious of their actions, wanted sufficient presence of mind to repress the impertinence of their young partners, who sought to direct to themselves those sighs which the lips of our agitated beauties intended for heaven. Some of the gentlemen had gone downstairs to smoke a quiet cigar, and the rest of the company gladly embraced a happy suggestion of the hostess to retire into another room which was provided with shutters and curtains. We had hardly got there, when Charlotte placed the chairs in a circle; and when the company had sat down in compliance with her request, she forthwith proposed a round game.

I noticed some of the company prepare their mouths and draw themselves up at the prospect of some agreeable forfeit. "Let us play at counting," said Charlotte. "Now, pay attention: I shall go round the circle from right to left; and each person is to count, one after the other, the number that comes to him, and must count fast; whoever stops or mistakes is to have a box on the ear, and so on, till we have counted a thousand." It was delightful to see the fun. She went round the circle with upraised arm. "One," said the first; "two," the second; "three," the third; and so, till Charlotte went faster and faster. One made a mistake, instantly a box on the ear; and amid the laughter that ensued, came another box; and so on, faster and faster. I myself came in for two. I fancied they were harder than the rest, and felt quite delighted. A general laughter and confusion put an end to the game long before we had counted as far as a thousand. The party broke up into little separate knots; the storm had ceased, and I followed

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THE NOVEL IN GERMANY

THE fact that newspaper reporters commonly call their articles "stories" points to a certain analogy between the novel and the newspaper. Even when prose fiction aims to be a fine art, it readily takes on a journalistic character; it is usually designed for immediate effect—at the concomitant risk of producing no other—and it easily passes from hand to hand or from country to country. In our day prose fiction is almost an international phenomenon: novels of a high degree of popularity are immediately translated and promptly imitated in the most distant quarters of the globe.

In the universal give and take of literary commodities Germany has played her part and, from time to time at least, has been in no wise a debtor nation; but she has more often followed than led along new paths, making up in thoroughness what she lacked in originality, and a superficial history of the German novel would be little more than a record of how successive foreign influences were turned to account in domestic production. Thus, in the eighteenth century such sorrows as those of Werther would doubtless have found some form of expression, but Goethe could not have expressed them as he did without the example of Rousseau and Richardson. Wieland and Jean Paul Richter are inconceivable without Fielding and Sterne. In the nineteenth century the epochs of German novel-writing are marked by the times when Scott, Dickens, Balzac, Dumas, Sue, George Sand, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Björnson, Turgenev, Zola, or some other foreigner, happened for the moment to be most conspicuous on the literary horizon. During the century that lies between Goethe and Hauptmann there is hardly a German novelist who has invited imitation abroad. It is in the lyric poem that the Germans have excelled, and in the drama and the opera that they have scored their international successes.

The history of the German novel would have, however, also to record that those writers have secured the most permanent distinction who have most significantly modified in their own way the suggestions which foreign examples gave them, and that the greatest distinction of all belongs to writers whom we can, if we will, associate with one or another of the main currents, but who are by no means carried away by it. In the work of these men the national character of the German novel, if it has a national character, ought to be discoverable.

For two reasons it is a fair question whether the German novel has a national character. In the first place, modern Germany has been a nation only since 1871; and in the second place, only in times of some great crisis does there appear to be in Germany a national life, as we understand the term. At other times life in Germany is urban, provincial, or private, in those aspects of existence which the Germans most prize. The imperial capital affects to represent Germany as London represents England and Paris represents France; but such ascendancy is stoutly denied Berlin in the capitals of the other states, and Saxons or Bavarians refuse to submit to Prussian hegemony in any other than political and military affairs. In literature Prussia is not the nation; the empire itself is a federation of states, and Berlin is less specifically a German city than any other in the realm. Germany is emphatically *e pluribus*. Still, there may be some bond of union stronger than political alliance, some fundamental quality common to Prussian, Saxon, and Bavarian. In this we should seek the national character. We should find the national character depicted in the historical novel, which has had a great vogue in Germany; but we may discern it also in the fiction devoted to the problems of contemporary life.

It was Goethe's opinion that the hero of a novel should be passive, and so eminently dramatic a genius as Hebbel declared that the important thing for us to observe in any individual is not how he makes his mark in the world, but how the world makes its marks upon him. These views, synonymous in meaning, but uttered by men as different, one from the other, as two Germans could very well be, may

suffice as an indication of the common quality for which we are seeking: it is the metaphysical cast of the German mind. When Goethe contemplated the transitoriness of conditions, and in all his work endeavored to catch and preserve these fleeting phenomena, or when Hebbel defined man as the resultant of conflicting forces rather than as an effective force in himself, both evidently thought of life as a product, not as a producer, and sought the meaning of life in personal reaction rather than in personal action. The life of which the German desires abundance is the inner life. Character is to him a greater good than conduct.

Accordingly, German literature is not rich in tales of adventurous activity—indeed, it affords few examples of pure narrative, that is, of stories told chiefly for the sake of chronicling events. When such a master narrator as Heinrich von Kleist tells a tale, he presents the facts objectively—no judicial referee could be more circumstantial; but in the case on which he reports the author sees the impersonation of a problem, and the data which really concern him are the perturbed emotions of a man or woman. The same is true of Kleist's contemporary, Ludwig Tieck, of the amiable Theodor Storm, and of the prolific Paul Heyse. The character, in its peculiar make-up and its peculiar circumstances, presents a problem, and the most significant evidence that its experiences furnish is its reaction upon the outside world. An author who treats this character will, then, dwell fondly upon psychological analysis and upon the atmosphere in which the character lives and moves and has its being.

These facts account for certain peculiarities of form in German fiction which to us seem like defects. It generally takes a German novelist a long while to get under way, and he generally appears to move in spirals. He invites us to tarry and survey the scenery—to which his hero is wont to be more sensitive than we are—and he tends to elaborate episodes, which serve indeed to bring out qualities in his persons, but which, an impatient reader would say, delay the action. Evidently, it is not the action about which the author primarily cares. But the German novelist has

the merits of his defects: if he does not touch lightly, he does probe deeply, and if his characters cannot manage to get things done and over, their impediment is an excess of those personal endowments which have after all to be reckoned among the positive values of life. It is better to be sentimental or even whimsical than to have neither sentiments nor ideas.

Sentimentality and whimsicality are apt to strike one as the most prominent traits of any art that aims at what is characteristic and individual, rather than at what is typical and broadly representative. The Germans are individualists. They can cooperate efficiently with their fellow Germans, but each insists upon being himself. The German novelist will surely treat by preference a character of notable peculiarity, and if he writes many novels, he will try to give a conspectus of the qualities of the stock to which he belongs. Thus Reuter presents many characteristic figures taken from Mecklenburg; Ludwig from Thuringia; Auerbach from the Black Forest; Gotthelf, Keller, and Zahn from Switzerland; Fontane from Brandenburg; Storm and Frenssen from Schleswig-Holstein. So strong is this tendency that the Germans have a special name for this kind of art; they call it *Heimatkunst*, a word which may be translated "art of the native heath." If the author is a humorist, like Reuter or Keller, he will successfully recommend his whimsical creations to our indulgent esteem; or if he is a discriminating lover of mankind, like Ludwig, he will reconcile us even to the supersensitiveness of a narrow-minded but noble-hearted slater. The danger incurred by writers without humor and without discrimination is that their creations shall seem boorish or lachrymose.

Probably the most pitiful failures in German fiction have attended those imitators of foreign models who mistook for "modern" what is simply shallow and frivolous, and, trying to be smart, proved themselves merely clumsy. Freytag, call him a Philistine if you will, is preferable, with his gospel of toil for one's daily bread, to those who would hold the dissolute idlers of the great cities to be typical representatives of modern life. Fontane, on the other hand, as "modern" as any, shows how an intelligent and cultivated

man can assimilate foreign suggestions, remain himself, and treat the actualities of life with a matter-of-factness as far from cynicism as it is from prudery.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the German Romanticists proclaimed the novel (*in German der Roman*) the supremely appropriate form for Romantic literature, and they regarded this truth as especially illustrated by Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister." The novel, they said, is not merely the most elastic, the most inclusive, the freest of the literary forms, it is the form in which a writer can most perfectly convey by suggestion and implication the infinitude of relations in which persons and objects stand to their environment, but which the necessarily sharper contours of the other forms—notably the drama—do not permit. By contrast to the drama, which in a certain sense is similar to statuary, the novel is picturesque; that is, it presents figures in relation to their background; and it is quite conceivable that in some compositions the whole, with what corresponds to perspective and to light and shade—in other words "atmosphere"—is more significant than the individual figures that are given their setting in this whole. This, at any rate, is the case with "Wilhelm Meister." A story first conceived as the fulfilment of a theatrical mission by a young man whose experience was an education, became the picture of a world full of influences, many of them mysterious, that operate to develop personality.

The German novel after Goethe followed his lead. The idea of education by experience, and the idea of the symbolical presentation of the inexplicable background of life, give to some of the greatest examples of prose fiction of the nineteenth century—such as Mörike's "Maler Nolten," Keller's "Grüner Heinrich," and Spielhagen's "Problematische Naturen"—this Goethean, Romantic picturesqueness. If the heroes are seldom great public characters and the background of their lives does not always suggest relations with illimitable space, these facts find their explanation in the German proneness to particularism.

To this particularism the short story would seem to be especially adapted. In fact, the Germans—again following Goethe's lead—have probably attained to a higher excel-

lence in the short story than in the novel. It is to their advantage that in the narrow limits of this form they have no opportunity to philosophize; they must relate how something happened of which their auditors have not heard, or must depict a situation as it discloses itself to a passing glance. The Swiss Keller and Meyer and many Germans, Austrians, and Swiss of our own time have attained considerable virtuosity in this form; but many of their products would have to be called little novels rather than short stories in the technical sense.

There are, then, some national traits in German prose fiction taken by and large. The Germans cannot vie with the English as writers of stories long or short. They have, however, much more to offer than has yet been widely circulated. During the past forty years the world has marveled at their achievements in the multifarious departments of active life. Nevertheless, their highest ideal is not doing, but being; and this being is faithfully reflected in their novels and tales.

W. G. H.

THE SORROWS OF WERTHER

BY

J. W. VON GOETHE

TRANSLATED BY

BAYARD TAYLOR

CRITICISM AND INTERPRETATION

By Thomas Carlyle

BY degrees, however, after not a little suffering in many hard contests with himself and his circumstances, Goethe began to emerge from these troubles: light dawned on his course; and his true destination, a life of literature, became more and more plain to him. His first efforts were crowned with a success well calculated to confirm him in such purposes. "Götz von Berlichingen," an historical drama of the Feudal Ages, appeared in 1773; by the originality both of its subject and its execution, attracting the public eye to the young author: and next year his "Sorrows of Werter" rose like a literary meteor on the world; and carried his name on its blazing wings, not only over Germany, but into the remotest corners of Europe. The chief incident of this work had been suggested by a tragical catastrophe, which had occurred in his neighbourhood, during a residence at Wetzlar: the emotions and delineations which give life to it; the vague impassioned longing, the moody melancholy, the wayward love and indignation, the soft feeling and the stern philosophy, which characterize the hero, he had drawn from his own past or actual experience.

The works just mentioned, though noble specimens of youthful talent, are still not so much distinguished by their intrinsic merits, as by their splendid fortune. It would be difficult to name two books which have exercised a deeper influence on the subsequent literature of Europe than these two performances of a young author; his first fruits, the produce of his twenty-fourth year. "Werter" appeared to seize the hearts of men in all quarters of the world, and to utter for them the word which they had long been waiting to hear. As usually happens, too, this same word once

uttered was soon abundantly repeated; spoken in all dialects, and chanted through all the notes of the gamut, till at length the sound of it had grown a weariness rather than a pleasure. Sceptical sentimentality, view-hunting, love, friendship, suicide, and desperation, became the staple of literary ware; and though the epidemic, after a long course of years, subsided in Germany, it reappeared with various modifications in other countries; and everywhere abundant traces of its good and bad effects are still to be discerned. . . .

But overlooking these spiritual genealogies, which bring little certainty and little profit, it may be sufficient to observe of "Berlichingen" and "Werter," that they stand prominent among the causes, or, at the very least, among the signals, of a great change in modern Literature. The former directed men's attention with a new force to the picturesque effects of the Past; and the latter, for the first time, attempted the more accurate delineation of a class of feelings, deeply important to modern minds; but for which our elder poetry offered no exponent, and perhaps could offer none, because they are feelings that arise from passion incapable of being converted into action, and belong chiefly to an age as indolent, cultivated, and unbelieving, as our own. This, notwithstanding the dash of falsehood which may exist in "Werter" itself, and the boundless delirium of extravagance which it called forth in others, is a high praise which cannot justly be denied it.—From "German Romance" (1827).

THE SORROWS OF WERTHER

BOOK I

MAY 4.

HOW happy I am that I am gone! My dear friend, what a thing is the heart of man! To leave you, from whom I have been inseparable, whom I love so dearly, and yet to feel happy! I know you will forgive me. Have not other attachments been specially appointed by fate to torment a head like mine? Poor Leonora! and yet I was not to blame. Was it my fault, that, whilst the peculiar charms of her sister afforded me an agreeable entertainment, a passion for me was engendered in her feeble heart? And yet am I wholly blameless? Did I not encourage her emotions? Did I not feel charmed at those truly genuine expressions of nature, which, though but little mirthful in reality, so often amused us? Did I not —but oh! what is man, that he dares so to accuse himself? My dear friend, I promise you I will improve; I will no longer, as has ever been my habit, continue to ruminate on every petty vexation which fortune may dispense; I will enjoy the present, and the past shall be for me the past. No doubt you are right, my best of friends, there would be far less suffering amongst mankind, if men—and God knows why they are so fashioned—did not employ their imaginations so assiduously in recalling the memory of past sorrow, instead of bearing their present lot with equanimity.

Be kind enough to inform my mother that I shall attend to her business to the best of my ability, and shall give her the earliest information about it. I have seen my aunt, and find that she is very far from being the disagreeable person our friends allege her to be. She is a lively, cheerful woman, with the best of hearts. I explained to her my mother's wrongs with regard to that part of her portion which has been withheld from her. She told me the motives

and reasons of her own conduct, and the terms on which she is willing to give up the whole, and to do more than we have asked. In short, I cannot write further upon this subject at present; only assure my mother that all will go on well. And I have again observed, my dear friend, in this trifling affair, that misunderstandings and neglect occasion more mischief in the world than even malice and wickedness. At all events, the two latter are of less frequent occurrence.

In other respects I am very well off here. Solitude in this terrestrial paradise is a genial balm to my mind, and the young spring cheers with its bounteous promises my oftentimes misgiving heart. Every tree, every bush, is full of flowers; and one might wish himself transformed into a butterfly, to float about in this ocean of perfume, and find his whole existence in it.

The town itself is disagreeable; but then, all around, you find an inexpressible beauty of Nature. This induced the late Count M—— to lay out a garden on one of the sloping hills which here intersect each other with the most charming variety, and form the most lovely valleys. The garden is simple; and it is easy to perceive, even upon your first entrance, that the plan was not designed by a scientific gardener, but by a man who wished to give himself up here to the enjoyment of his own sensitive heart. Many a tear have I already shed to the memory of its departed master in a summer-house which is now reduced to ruins, but was his favourite resort, and now is mine. I shall soon be master of the place. The gardener has become attached to me within the last few days, and he will lose nothing thereby.

MAY 10.

A wonderful serenity has taken possession of my entire soul, like these sweet mornings of spring which I enjoy with my whole heart. I am alone, and feel the charm of existence in this spot, which was created for the bliss of souls like mine. I am so happy, my dear friend, so absorbed in the exquisite sense of mere tranquil existence, that I neglect my talents. I should be incapable of draw-

ing a single stroke at the present moment; and yet I feel that I never was a greater artist than now. When, while the lovely valley teems with vapour around me, and the meridian sun strikes the upper surface of the impenetrable foliage of my trees, and but a few stray gleams steal into the inner sanctuary, I throw myself down among the tall grass by the trickling stream; and as I lie close to the earth, a thousand unknown plants are noticed by me: when I hear the buzz of the little world among the stalks, and grow familiar with the countless indescribable forms of the insects and flies, then I feel the presence of the Almighty, who formed us in his own image, and the breath of that universal love which bears and sustains us, as it floats around us in an eternity of bliss; and then, my friend, when darkness overspreads my eyes, and heaven and earth seem to dwell in my soul and absorb its power, like the form of a beloved mistress,—then I often think with longing, Oh, would I could describe these conceptions, could impress upon paper all that is living so full and warm within me, that it might be the mirror of my soul, as my soul is the mirror of the infinite God! O my friend—but it is too much for my strength—I sink under the weight of the splendour of these visions!

MAY 12.

I know not whether some deceitful spirits haunt this spot, or whether it be the warm, celestial fancy in my own heart which makes everything around me seem like paradise. In front of the house is a fountain,—a fountain to which I am bound by a charm like Melusina and her sisters. Descending a gentle slope, you come to an arch, where, some twenty steps lower down, water of the clearest crystal gushes from the marble rock. The narrow wall which encloses it above, the tall trees which encircle the spot, and the coolness of the place itself,—everything imparts a pleasant but sublime impression. Not a day passes on which I do not spend an hour there. The young maidens come from the town to fetch water,—innocent and necessary employment, and formerly the occupation of the daughters of kings. As I take my rest there, the idea of the old

patriarchal life is awakened around me. I see them, our old ancestors, how they formed their friendships and contracted alliances at the fountain-side; and I feel how fountains and streams were guarded by beneficent spirits. He who is a stranger to these sensations has never really enjoyed cool repose at the side of a fountain after the fatigue of a weary summer day.

MAY 13.

You ask if you shall send me books. My dear friend, I beseech you, for the love of God, relieve me from such a yoke! I need no more to be guided, agitated, heated. My heart ferments sufficiently of itself. I want strains to lull me, and I find them to perfection in my Homer. Often do I strive to allay the burning fever of my blood; and you have never witnessed anything so unsteady, so uncertain, as my heart. But need I confess this to you, my dear friend, who have so often endured the anguish of witnessing my sudden transitions from sorrow to immoderate joy, and from sweet melancholy to violent passions? I treat my poor heart like a sick child, and gratify its every fancy. Do not mention this again: there are people who would censure me for it.

MAY 15.

The common people of the place know me already, and love me, particularly the children. When at first I associated with them, and inquired in a friendly tone about their various trifles, some fancied that I wished to ridicule them, and turned from me in exceeding ill-humour. I did not allow that circumstance to grieve me: I only felt most keenly what I have often before observed. Persons who can claim a certain rank keep themselves coldly aloof from the common people, as though they feared to lose their importance by the contact; whilst wanton idlers, and such as are prone to bad joking, affect to descend to their level, only to make the poor people feel their impertinence all the more keenly.

I know very well that we are not all equal, nor can be so; but it is my opinion that he who avoids the common people,

in order not to lose their respect, is as much to blame as a coward who hides himself from his enemy because he fears defeat.

The other day I went to the fountain, and found a young servant-girl, who had set her pitcher on the lowest step, and looked round to see if one of her companions was approaching to place it on her head. I ran down, and looked at her. "Shall I help you, pretty lass?" said I. She blushed deeply. "Oh, sir!" she exclaimed. "No ceremony!" I replied. She adjusted her head-gear, and I helped her. She thanked me, and ascended the steps.

MAY 17.

I have made all sorts of acquaintances, but have as yet found no society. I know not what attraction I possess for the people, so many of them like me, and attach themselves to me; and then I feel sorry when the road we pursue together goes only a short distance. If you inquire what the people are like here, I must answer, "The same as everywhere." The human race is but a monotonous affair. Most of them labour the greater part of their time for mere subsistence; and the scanty portion of freedom which remains to them so troubles them that they use every exertion to get rid of it. Oh, the destiny of man!

But they are a right good sort of people. If I occasionally forget myself, and take part in the innocent pleasures which are not yet forbidden to the peasantry, and enjoy myself, for instance, with genuine freedom and sincerity, round a well-covered table, or arrange an excursion or a dance opportunely, and so forth, all this produces a good effect upon my disposition; only I must forget that there lie dormant within me so many other qualities which moulder uselessly, and which I am obliged to keep carefully concealed. Ah! this thought affects my spirits fearfully. And yet to be misunderstood is the fate of the like of us.

Alas, that the friend of my youth is gone! Alas, that I ever knew her! I might say to myself, "You are a dreamer to seek what is not to be found here below." But she has been mine. I have possessed that heart, that noble soul, in whose presence I seemed to be more than I really

was, because I was all that I could be. Good heavens! did then a single power of my soul remain unexercised? In her presence could I not display, to its full extent, that mysterious feeling with which my heart embraces Nature? Was not our intercourse a perpetual web of the finest emotions, of the keenest wit, the varieties of which, even in their very eccentricity, bore the stamp of genius? Alas! the few years by which she was my senior brought her to the grave before me. Never can I forget her firm mind or her heavenly patience.

A few days ago I met a certain young V——, a frank, open fellow, with a most pleasing countenance. He has just left the university, does not deem himself over-wise, but believes he knows more than other people. He has worked hard, as I can perceive from many circumstances, and, in short, possesses a large stock of information. When he heard that I am drawing a good deal, and that I know Greek (two wonderful things for this part of the country), he came to see me, and displayed his whole store of learning, from Batteaux to Wood, from De Piles to Winkelmann: he assured me he had read through the first part of Sultzer's theory, and also possessed a manuscript of Heyne's work on the study of the antique. I allowed it all to pass.

I have become acquainted, also, with a very worthy person, the district judge, a frank and open-hearted man. I am told it is a most delightful thing to see him in the midst of his children, of whom he has nine. His eldest daughter especially is highly spoken of. He has invited me to go and see him, and I intend to do so on the first opportunity. He lives at one of the royal hunting-lodges, which can be reached from here in an hour and a half by walking, and which he obtained leave to inhabit after the loss of his wife, as it is so painful to him to reside in town and at the court.

There have also come in my way a few other originals of a questionable sort, who are in all respects undesirable, and most intolerable in their demonstrations of friendship. Good-by. This letter will please you; it is quite historical.

MAY 22.

That the life of man is but a dream, many a man has surmised heretofore; and I, too, am everywhere pursued by this feeling. When I consider the narrow limits within which our active and inquiring faculties are confined; when I see how all our energies are wasted in providing for mere necessities, which again have no further end than to prolong a wretched existence; and then that all our satisfaction concerning certain subjects of investigation ends in nothing better than a passive resignation, whilst we amuse ourselves painting our prison-walls with bright figures and brilliant landscapes,—when I consider all this, Wilhelm, I am silent. I examine my own being, and find there a world, but a world rather of imagination and dim desires, than of distinctness and living power. Then everything swims before my senses, and I smile and dream while pursuing my way through the world.

All learned professors and doctors are agreed that children do not comprehend the cause of their desires; but that the grown-up should wander about this earth like children, without knowing whence they come, or whither they go, influenced as little by fixed motives, but guided like them by biscuits, sugar-plums, and the rod,—this is what nobody is willing to acknowledge; and yet I think it is palpable.

I know what you will say in reply; for I am ready to admit that they are happiest, who, like children, amuse themselves with their play-things, dress and undress their dolls, and attentively watch the cupboard, where mamma has locked up her sweet things, and, when at last they get a delicious morsel, eat it greedily, and exclaim, "More!" These are certainly happy beings; but others also are objects of envy, who dignify their paltry employments, and sometimes even their passions, with pompous titles, representing them to mankind as gigantic achievements performed for their welfare and glory. But the man who humbly acknowledges the vanity of all this, who observes with what pleasure the thriving citizen converts his little garden into a paradise, and how patiently even the poor man pursues his weary way under his burden, and how all wish equally to behold the light of the sun a little longer,—yes, such a man is at

peace, and creates his own world within himself; and he is also happy, because he is a man. And then, however limited his sphere, he still preserves in his bosom the sweet feeling of liberty, and knows that he can quit his prison whenever he likes.

MAY 26.

You know of old my ways of settling anywhere, of selecting a little cottage in some cosey spot, and of putting up in it with every inconvenience. Here, too, I have discovered such a snug, comfortable place, which possesses peculiar charms for me.

About a league from the town is a place called Walheim.[1] It is delightfully situated on the side of a hill; and by proceeding along one of the footpaths which lead out of the village, you can have a view of the whole valley. A good old woman lives there, who keeps a small inn. She sells wine, beer, and coffee, and is cheerful and pleasant notwithstanding her age. The chief charm of this spot consists in two linden-trees, spreading their enormous branches over the little green before the church, which is entirely surrounded by peasants' cottages, barns, and homesteads. I have seldom seen a place so retired and peaceable; and there often have my table and chair brought out from the little inn, and drink my coffee there, and read my Homer. Accident brought me to the spot one fine afternoon, and I found it perfectly deserted. Everybody was in the fields except a little boy about four years of age, who was sitting on the ground, and held between his knees a child about six months old; he pressed it to his bosom with both arms, which thus formed a sort of armchair; and notwithstanding the liveliness which sparkled in its black eyes, it remained perfectly still. The sight charmed me. I sat down upon a plough opposite, and sketched with great delight this little picture of brotherly tenderness. I added the neighbouring hedge, the barn-door, and some broken cart-wheels, just as they happened to lie; and I found in about an hour that I had made a very correct and interesting drawing, without

[1] The reader need not take the trouble to look for the place thus designated. We have found it necessary to change the names given in the original.

putting in the slightest thing of my own. This confirmed me in my resolution of adhering, for the future, entirely to Nature. She alone is inexhaustible, and capable of forming the greatest masters. Much may be alleged in favour of rules; as much may be likewise advanced in favour of the laws of society: an artist formed upon them will never produce anything absolutely bad or disgusting; as a man who observes the laws and obeys decorum can never be an absolutely intolerable neighbour nor a decided villain: but yet, say what you will of rules, they destroy the genuine feeling of Nature, as well as its true expression. Do not tell me "that this is too hard, that they only restrain and prune superfluous branches, etc." My good friend, I will illustrate this by an analogy. These things resemble love. A warm-hearted youth becomes strongly attached to a maiden: he spends every hour of the day in her company, wears out his health, and lavishes his fortune, to afford continual proof that he is wholly devoted to her. Then comes a man of the world, a man of place and respectability, and addresses him thus: "My good young friend, love is natural; but you must love within bounds. Divide your time: devote a portion to business, and give the hours of recreation to your mistress. Calculate your fortune; and out of the superfluity you may make her a present, only not too often,—on her birthday, and such occasions." Pursuing this advice, he may become a useful member of society, and I should advise every prince to give him an appointment; but it is all up with his love, and with his genius if he be an artist. O my friend! why is it that the torrent of genius so seldom bursts forth, so seldom rolls in full-flowing stream, overwhelming your astounded soul? Because, on either side of this stream, cold and respectable persons have taken up their abodes, and, forsooth, their summer-houses and tulip-beds would suffer from the torrent; wherefore they dig trenches, and raise embankments betimes, in order to avert the impending danger.

MAY 27.

I find I have fallen into raptures, declamation, and similes, and have forgotten, in consequence, to tell you what became

of the children. Absorbed in my artistic contemplations, which I briefly described in my letter of yesterday, I continued sitting on the plough for two hours. Towards evening a young woman, with a basket on her arm, came running towards the children, who had not moved all that time. She exclaimed from a distance, "You are a good boy, Philip!" She gave me greeting: I returned it, rose, and approached her. I inquired if she were the mother of those pretty children. "Yes," she said; and, giving the eldest a piece of bread, she took the little one in her arms and kissed it with a mother's tenderness. "I left my child in Philip's care," she said, "whilst I went into the town with my eldest boy to buy some wheaten bread, some sugar, and an earthen pot." I saw the various articles in the basket, from which the cover had fallen. "I shall make some broth to-night for my little Hans (which was the name of the youngest): that wild fellow, the big one, broke my pot yesterday, whilst he was scrambling with Philip for what remained of the contents." I inquired for the eldest; and she had scarcely time to tell me that he was driving a couple of geese home from the meadow, when he ran up, and handed Philip an osier-twig. I talked a little longer with the woman, and found that she was the daughter of the schoolmaster, and that her husband was gone on a journey into Switzerland for some money a relation had left him. "They wanted to cheat him," she said, "and would not answer his letters; so he is gone there himself. I hope he has met with no accident, as I have heard nothing of him since his departure." I left the woman with regret, giving each of the children a kreutzer, with an additional one for the youngest, to buy some wheaten bread for his broth when she went to town next; and so we parted.

I assure you, my dear friend, when my thoughts are all in tumult, the sight of such a creature as this tranquillises my disturbed mind. She moves in a happy thoughtlessness within the confined circle of her existence; she supplies her wants from day to day; and when she sees the leaves fall, they raise no other idea in her mind than that winter is approaching.

Since that time I have gone out there frequently. The children have become quite familiar with me; and each gets a lump of sugar when I drink my coffee, and they share my milk and bread and butter in the evening. They always receive their kreutzer on Sundays, for the good woman has orders to give it to them when I do not go there after evening service.

They are quite at home with me, tell me everything; and I am particularly amused with observing their tempers, and the simplicity of their behaviour, when some of the other village children are assembled with them.

It has given me a deal of trouble to satisfy the anxiety of the mother, lest (as she says) "they should inconvenience the gentleman."

MAY 30.

What I have lately said of painting is equally true with respect to poetry. It is only necessary for us to know what is really excellent, and venture to give it expression; and that is saying much in few words. To-day I have had a scene which, if literally related, would make the most beautiful idyl in the world. But why should I talk of poetry and scenes and idyls? Can we never take pleasure in Nature without having recourse to art?

If you expect anything grand or magnificent from this introduction, you will be sadly mistaken. It relates merely to a peasant-lad, who has excited in me the warmest interest. As usual, I shall tell my story badly; and you, as usual, will think me extravagant. It is Walheim once more —always Walheim—which produces these wonderful phenomena.

A party had assembled outside the house under the linden-trees, to drink coffee. The company did not exactly please me; and, under one pretext or another, I lingered behind.

A peasant came from an adjoining house, and set to work arranging some part of the same plough which I had lately sketched. His appearance pleased me; and I spoke to him, inquired about his circumstances, made his acquaintance, and, as is my wont with persons of that class, was soon admitted into his confidence. He said he was in the service

of a young widow, who set great store by him. He spoke so much of his mistress, and praised her so extravagantly, that I could soon see he was desperately in love with her. "She is no longer young," he said; "and she was treated so badly by her former husband that she does not mean to marry again." From his account it was so evident what incomparable charms she possessed for him, and how ardently he wished she would select him to extinguish the recollection of her first husband's misconduct, that I should have to repeat his own words in order to describe the depth of the poor fellow's attachment, truth, and devotion. It would, in fact, require the gifts of a great poet to convey the expression of his features, the harmony of his voice, and the heavenly fire of his eye. No words can portray the tenderness of his every movement and of every feature; no effort of mine could do justice to the scene. His alarm lest I should misconceive his position with regard to his mistress, or question the propriety of her conduct, touched me particularly. The charming manner with which he described her form and person, which, without possessing the graces of youth, won and attached him to her, is inexpressible, and must be left to the imagination. I have never in my life witnessed or fancied or conceived the possibility of such intense devotion, such ardent affections, united with so much purity. Do not blame me if I say that the recollection of this innocence and truth is deeply impressed upon my very soul; that this picture of fidelity and tenderness haunts me everywhere: and that my own heart, as though enkindled by the flame, glows and burns within me.

I mean now to try and see her as soon as I can: or perhaps, on second thoughts, I had better not; it is better I should behold her through the eyes of her lover. To my sight, perhaps, she would not appear as she now stands before me; and why should I destroy so sweet a picture?

JUNE 16.

"Why do I not write to you?" You lay claim to learning, and ask such a question. You should have guessed that I am well—that is to say—in a word, I have made an acquaintance who has won my heart: I have—I know not.

To give you a regular account of the manner in which I have become acquainted with the most amiable of women would be a difficult task. I am a happy and contented mortal, but a poor historian.

An angel! Nonsense! Everybody so describes his mistress; and yet I find it impossible to tell you how perfect she is, or why she is so perfect: suffice it to say she has captivated all my senses.

So much simplicity with so much understanding—so mild, and yet so resolute—a mind so placid, and a life so active.

But all this is ugly balderdash, which expresses not a single character nor feature. Some other time—but no, not some other time, now, this very instant, will I tell you all about it. Now or never. Well, between ourselves, since I commenced my letter, I have been three times on the point of throwing down my pen, of ordering my horse, and riding out. And yet I vowed this morning that I would not ride to-day, and yet every moment I am rushing to the window to see how high the sun is.

. . . . . .

I could not restrain myself—go to her I must. I have just returned, Wilhelm; and whilst I am taking supper, I will write to you. What a delight it was for my soul to see her in the midst of her dear, beautiful children,—eight brothers and sisters!

But if I proceed thus, you will be no wiser at the end of my letter than you were at the beginning. Attend, then, and I will compel myself to give you the details.

I mentioned to you the other day that I had become acquainted with S——, the district judge, and that he had invited me to go and visit him in his retirement, or rather in his little kingdom. But I neglected going, and perhaps should never have gone, if chance had not discovered to me the treasure which lay concealed in that retired spot. Some of our young people had proposed giving a ball in the country, at which I consented to be present. I offered my hand for the evening to a pretty and agreeable, but rather commonplace, sort of girl from the immediate neighbourhood; and it was agreed that I should engage a carriage, and call upon Charlotte, with my partner and her aunt, to

convey them to the ball. My companion informed me, as we drove along through the park to the hunting-lodge, that I should make the acquaintance of a very charming young lady. "Take care," added the aunt, "that you do not lose your heart." "Why?" said I. "Because she is already engaged to a very worthy man," she replied, "who is gone to settle his affairs upon the death of his father, and will succeed to a very considerable inheritance." This information possessed no interest for me. When we arrived at the gate, the sun was setting behind the tops of the mountains. The atmosphere was heavy; and the ladies expressed their fears of an approaching storm, as masses of low black clouds were gathering in the horizon. I relieved their anxieties by pretending to be weather-wise, although I myself had some apprehensions lest our pleasure should be interrupted.

I alighted; and a maid came to the door, and requested us to wait a moment for her mistress. I walked across the court to a well-built house, and, ascending the flight of steps in front, opened the door, and saw before me the most charming spectacle I had ever witnessed. Six children, from eleven to two years old, were running about the hall, and surrounding a lady of middle height, with a lovely figure, dressed in a robe of simple white, trimmed with pink ribbons. She was holding a rye loaf in her hand, and was cutting slices for the little ones all round, in proportion to their age and appetite. She performed her task in a graceful and affectionate manner; each claimant awaiting his turn with outstretched hands, and boisterously shouting his thanks. Some of them ran away at once, to enjoy their evening meal; whilst others, of a gentler disposition, retired to the courtyard to see the strangers, and to survey the carriage in which their Charlotte was to drive away. "Pray forgive me for giving you the trouble to come for me, and for keeping the ladies waiting: but dressing, and arranging some household duties before I leave, had made me forget my children's supper; and they do not like to take it from any one but me." I uttered some indifferent compliment: but my whole soul was absorbed by her air, her voice, her manner; and I had scarcely recovered myself when she ran into her room to fetch her gloves and fan. The young ones

threw inquiring glances at me from a distance; whilst I approached the youngest, a most delicious little creature. He drew back; and Charlotte, entering at the very moment, said, "Louis, shake hands with your cousin." The little fellow obeyed willingly; and I could not resist giving him a hearty kiss, notwithstanding his rather dirty face. "Cousin," said I to Charlotte, as I handed her down, "do you think I deserve the happiness of being related to you?" She replied, with a ready smile, "Oh! I have such a number of cousins that I should be sorry if you were the most undeserving of them." In taking leave, she desired her next sister, Sophy, a girl about eleven years old, to take great care of the children, and to say good-by to papa for her when he came home from his ride. She enjoined to the little ones to obey their sister Sophy as they would herself, upon which some promised that they would; but a little fair-haired girl, about six years old, looked discontented, and said, "But Sophy is not you, Charlotte; and we like you best." The two eldest boys had clambered up the carriage; and, at my request, she permitted them to accompany us a little way through the forest, upon their promising to sit very still, and hold fast.

We were hardly seated, and the ladies had scarcely exchanged compliments, making the usual remarks upon each other's dress, and upon the company they expected to meet, when Charlotte stopped the carriage, and made her brothers get down. They insisted upon kissing her hands once more; which the eldest did with all the tenderness of a youth of fifteen, but the other in a lighter and more careless manner. She desired them again to give her love to the children, and we drove off.

The aunt inquired of Charlotte whether she had finished the book she had last sent her. "No," said Charlotte; "I did not like it: you can have it again. And the one before was not much better." I was surprised, upon asking the title, to hear that it was ——.[1] I found penetration and character in everything she said: every expression seemed to brighten her features with new charms, with new rays

[1] We feel obliged to suppress the passage in the letter, to prevent any one from feeling aggrieved; although no author need pay much attention to the opinion of a mere girl, or that of an unsteady young man.

of genius, which unfolded by degrees, as she felt herself understood.

"When I was younger," she observed, "I loved nothing so much as romances. Nothing could equal my delight when, on some holiday, I could settle down quietly in a corner, and enter with my whole heart and soul into the joys or sorrows of some fictitious Leonora. I do not deny that they even possess some charms for me yet. But I read so seldom that I prefer books suited exactly to my taste. And I like those authors best whose scenes describe my own situation in life,—and the friends who are about me whose stories touch me with interest, from resembling my own homely existence,—which, without being absolutely paradise, is, on the whole, a source of indescribable happiness."

I endeavoured to conceal the emotion which these words occasioned, but it was of slight avail; for when she had expressed so truly her opinion of "The Vicar of Wakefield," and of other works, the names of which I omit,[1] I could no longer contain myself, but gave full utterance to what I thought of it; and it was not until Charlotte had addressed herself to the two other ladies, that I remembered their presence, and observed them sitting mute with astonishment. The aunt looked at me several times with an air of raillery, which, however, I did not at all mind.

We talked of the pleasures of dancing. "If it is a fault to love it," said Charlotte, "I am ready to confess that I prize it above all other amusements. If anything disturbs me, I go to the piano, play an air to which I have danced, and all goes right again directly."

You, who know me, can fancy how steadfastly I gazed upon her rich dark eyes during these remarks, how my very soul gloated over her warm lips and fresh, glowing cheeks, how I became quite lost in the delightful meaning of her words,—so much so, that I scarcely heard the actual expressions. In short, I alighted from the carriage like a person in a dream, and was so lost to the dim world around me that I scarcely heard the music which resounded from the illuminated ball-room.

[1] Though the names are omitted, yet the authors mentioned deserve Charlotte's approbation, and will feel it in their hearts when they read this passage. It concerns no other person.

The two Messrs. Andran and a certain N. N. (I cannot trouble myself with the names), who were the aunt's and Charlotte's partners, received us at the carriage-door, and took possession of their ladies, whilst I followed with mine.

We commenced with a minuet. I led out one lady after another, and precisely those who were the most disagreeable could not bring themselves to leave off. Charlotte and her partner began an English country dance, and you must imagine my delight when it was their turn to dance the figure with us.

You should see Charlotte dance. She dances with her whole heart and soul: her figure is all harmony, elegance, and grace, as if she were conscious of nothing else, and had no other thought or feeling; and, doubtless, for the moment every other sensation is extinct.

She was engaged for the second country dance, but promised me the third, and assured me, with the most agreeable freedom, that she was very fond of waltzing. "It is the custom here," she said, "for the previous partners to waltz together; but my partner is an indifferent waltzer, and will feel delighted if I save him the trouble. Your partner is not allowed to waltz, and, indeed, is equally incapable: but I observed during the country dance that you waltz well; so, if you will waltz with me, I beg you would propose it to my partner, and I will propose it to yours." We agreed, and it was arranged that our partners should mutually entertain each other.

We set off, and at first delighted ourselves with the usual graceful motions of the arms. With what grace, with what ease, she moved! When the waltz commenced, and the dancers whirled round each other in the giddy maze, there was some confusion, owing to the incapacity of some of the dancers. We judiciously remained still, allowing the others to weary themselves; and when the awkward dancers had withdrawn, we joined in, and kept it up famously together with one other couple,—Andran and his partner. Never did I dance more lightly. I felt myself more than mortal, holding this loveliest of creatures in my arms, flying with her as rapidly as the wind, till I lost sight of every

other object; and oh, Wilhelm, I vowed at that moment, that a maiden whom I loved, or for whom I felt the slightest attachment, never, never should waltz with any one else but with me, if I went to perdition for it!—you will understand this.

We took a few turns in the room to recover our breath. Charlotte sat down, and felt refreshed by partaking of some oranges which I had had secured,—the only ones that had been left; but at every slice which from politeness she offered to her neighbours, I felt as though a dagger went through my heart.

We were the second couple in the third country dance. As we were going down (and Heaven knows with what ecstasy I gazed at her arms and eyes, beaming with the sweetest feeling of pure and genuine enjoyment), we passed a lady whom I had noticed for her charming expression of countenance, although she was no longer young. She looked at Charlotte with a smile, then holding up her finger in a threatening attitude, repeated twice in a very significant tone of voice the name of "Albert."

"Who is Albert," said I to Charlotte, "if it is not impertinent to ask?" She was about to answer, when we were obliged to separate, in order to execute a figure in the dance; and as we crossed over again in front of each other, I perceived she looked somewhat pensive. "Why need I conceal it from you?" she said, as she gave me her hand for the promenade. "Albert is a worthy man, to whom I am engaged." Now, there was nothing new to me in this (for the girls had told me of it on the way); but it was so far new that I had not thought of it in connection with her whom in so short a time I had learned to prize so highly. Enough. I became confused, got out in the figure, and occasioned general confusion; so that it required all Charlotte's presence of mind to set me right by pulling and pushing me into my proper place.

The dance was not yet finished when the lightning which had for some time been seen in the horizon, and which I had asserted to proceed entirely from heat, grew more violent; and the thunder was heard above the music. When any distress or terror surprises us in the midst of our

amusements, it naturally makes a deeper impression than at other times, either because the contrast makes us more keenly susceptible, or rather perhaps because our senses are then more open to impressions, and the shock is consequently stronger. To this cause I must ascribe the fright and shrieks of the ladies. One sagaciously sat down in a corner with her back to the window, and held her fingers to her ears; a second knelt down before her, and hid her face in her lap; a third threw herself between them, and embraced her sister with a thousand tears; some insisted on going home; others, unconscious of their actions, wanted sufficient presence of mind to repress the impertinence of their young partners, who sought to direct to themselves those sighs which the lips of our agitated beauties intended for heaven. Some of the gentlemen had gone downstairs to smoke a quiet cigar, and the rest of the company gladly embraced a happy suggestion of the hostess to retire into another room which was provided with shutters and curtains. We had hardly got there, when Charlotte placed the chairs in a circle; and when the company had sat down in compliance with her request, she forthwith proposed a round game.

I noticed some of the company prepare their mouths and draw themselves up at the prospect of some agreeable forfeit. "Let us play at counting," said Charlotte. "Now, pay attention: I shall go round the circle from right to left; and each person is to count, one after the other, the number that comes to him, and must count fast; whoever stops or mistakes is to have a box on the ear, and so on, till we have counted a thousand." It was delightful to see the fun. She went round the circle with upraised arm. "One," said the first; "two," the second; "three," the third; and so, till Charlotte went faster and faster. One made a mistake, instantly a box on the ear; and amid the laughter that ensued, came another box; and so on, faster and faster. I myself came in for two. I fancied they were harder than the rest, and felt quite delighted. A general laughter and confusion put an end to the game long before we had counted as far as a thousand. The party broke up into little separate knots; the storm had ceased, and I followed

Charlotte into the ballroom. On the way she said, "The game banished their fears of the storm." I could make no reply. "I myself," she continued, "was as much frightened as any of them; but by affecting courage, to keep up the spirits of the others, I forgot my apprehensions." We went to the window. It was still thundering at a distance; a soft rain was pouring down over the country, and filled the air around us with delicious odours. Charlotte leaned forward on her arm; her eyes wandered over the scene; she raised them to the sky, and then turned them upon me: they were moistened with tears; she placed her hand on mine and said, "Klopstock!" At once I remembered the magnificent ode which was in her thoughts; I felt oppressed with the weight of my sensations, and sank under them. It was more than I could bear. I bent over her hand, kissed it in a stream of delicious tears, and again looked up to her eyes. Divine Klopstock! why didst thou not see thy apotheosis in those eyes? And thy name, so often profaned, would that I never heard it repeated!

JUNE 19.

I no longer remember where I stopped in my narrative; I only know it was two in the morning when I went to bed; and if you had been with me, that I might have talked instead of writing to you, I should, in all probability, have kept you up till daylight.

I think I have not yet related what happened as we rode home from the ball, nor have I time to tell you now. It was a most magnificent sunrise; the whole country was refreshed, and the rain fell drop by drop from the trees in the forest. Our companions were asleep. Charlotte asked me if I did not wish to sleep also, and begged of me not to make any ceremony on her account. Looking steadfastly at her, I answered, "As long as I see those eyes open, there is no fear of my falling asleep." We both continued awake till we reached her door. The maid opened it softly, and assured her, in answer to her inquiries, that her father and the children were well, and still sleeping. I left her, asking permission to visit her in the course of the day. She consented, and I went; and since that time sun, moon,

and stars may pursue their course: I know not whether it is day or night; the whole world is nothing to me.

JUNE 21.

My days are as happy as those reserved by God for his elect; and whatever be my fate hereafter, I can never say that I have not tasted joy,—the purest joy of life. You know Walheim. I am now completely settled there. In that spot I am only half a league from Charlotte; and there I enjoy myself, and taste all the pleasure which can fall to the lot of man.

Little did I imagine, when I selected Walheim for my pedestrian excursions, that all heaven lay so near it. How often, in my wanderings from the hillside or from the meadows across the river, have I beheld this hunting-lodge, which now contains within it all the joy of my heart!

I have often, my dear Wilhelm, reflected on the eagerness men feel to wander and make new discoveries, and upon that secret impulse which afterwards inclines them to return to their narrow circle, conform to the laws of custom, and embarrass themselves no longer with what passes around them.

It is so strange how, when I came here first, and gazed upon that lovely valley from the hillside, I felt charmed with the entire scene surrounding me. The little wood opposite,—how delightful to sit under its shade! How fine the view from that point of rock! Then that delightful chain of hills, and the exquisite valleys at their feet! Could I but wander and lose myself amongst them! I went, and returned without finding what I wished. Distance, my friend, is like futurity. A dim vastness is spread before our souls; the perceptions of our mind are as obscure as those of our vision; and we desire earnestly to surrender up our whole being, that it may be filled with the complete and perfect bliss of one glorious emotion. But alas! when we have attained our object, when the distant *there* becomes the present *here,* all is changed; we are as poor and circumscribed as ever, and our souls still languish for unattainable happiness.

So does the restless traveller pant for his native soil, and find in his own cottage, in the arms of his wife, in the affections of his children, and in the labour necessary for their support, that happiness which he had sought in vain through the wide world.

When in the morning at sunrise I go out to Walheim and with my own hands gather in the garden the pease which are to serve for my dinner; when I sit down to shell them, and read my Homer during the intervals, and then, selecting a saucepan from the kitchen, fetch my own butter, put my mess on the fire, cover it up, and sit down to stir it as occasion requires,—I figure to myself the illustrious suitors of Penelope, killing, dressing, and preparing their own oxen and swine. Nothing fills me with a more pure and genuine sense of happiness than those traits of patriarchal life which, thank Heaven! I can imitate without affectation. Happy is it, indeed, for me that my heart is capable of feeling the same simple and innocent pleasure as the peasant whose table is covered with food of his own rearing, and who not only enjoys his meal, but remembers with delight the happy days and sunny mornings when he planted it, the soft evenings when he watered it, and the pleasure he experienced in watching its daily growth.

JUNE 29.

The day before yesterday the physician came from the town to pay a visit to the judge. He found me on the floor playing with Charlotte's children. Some of them were scrambling over me, and others romped with me; and as I caught and tickled them, they made a great noise. The doctor is a formal sort of personage; he adjusts the plaits of his ruffles and continually settles his frill whilst he is talking to you; and he thought my conduct beneath the dignity of a sensible man. I could perceive this by his countenance; but I did not suffer myself to be disturbed. I allowed him to continue his wise conversation, whilst I rebuilt the children's card-houses for them as fast as they threw them down. He went about the town afterwards, complaining that the judge's children were spoiled enough before, but that now Werther was completely ruining them.

Yes, my dear Wilhelm, nothing on this earth affects my heart so much as children. When I look on at their doings; when I mark in the little creatures the seeds of all those virtues and qualities which they will one day find so indispensable; when I behold in the obstinate all the future firmness and constancy of a noble character, in the capricious that levity and gayety of temper which will carry them lightly over the dangers and troubles of life, their whole nature simple and unpolluted,—then I call to mind the golden words of the Great Teacher of mankind, "Unless ye become like one of these." And now, my friend, these children, who are our equals, whom we ought to consider as our models,—we treat them as though they were our subjects. They are allowed no will of their own. And have we, then, none ourselves? Whence comes our exclusive right? Is it because we are older and more experienced? Great God! from the height of thy heaven thou beholdest great children and little children, and no others; and thy Son has long since declared which afford thee greatest pleasure. But they believe in him and hear him not,—that, too, is an old story; and they train their children after their own image, etc.

Adieu, Wilhelm. I will not further bewilder myself with this subject.

JULY 1.

The consolation Charlotte can bring to an invalid I experience from my own heart, which suffers more from her absence than many a poor creature lingering on a bed of sickness. She is gone to spend a few days in the town with a very worthy woman, who is given over by the physicians, and wishes to have Charlotte near her in her last moments. I accompanied her last week on a visit to the vicar of S——, a small village in the mountains, about a league hence. We arrived about four o'clock. Charlotte had taken her little sister with her. When we entered the vicarage court, we found the good old man sitting on a bench before the door, under the shade of two large walnut-trees. At the sight of Charlotte he seemed to gain new life, rose, forgot his stick, and ventured to walk towards her. She ran

to him, and made him sit down again; then placing herself by his side, she gave him a number of messages from her father, and then caught up his youngest child,—a dirty, ugly little thing, the joy of his old age,—and kissed it. I wish you could have witnessed her attention to this old man,—how she raised her voice on account of his deafness; how she told him of healthy young people who had been carried off when it was least expected; praised the virtues of Carlsbad, and commended his determination to spend the ensuing summer there; and assured him that he looked better and stronger than he did when she saw him last. I, in the mean time, paid attention to his good lady. The old man seemed quite in spirits; and as I could not help admiring the beauty of the walnut-trees, which formed such an agreeable shade over our heads, he began, though with some little difficulty, to tell us their history. "As to the oldest," said he, "we do not know who planted it,—some say one clergyman, and some another; but the younger one, there behind us, is exactly the age of my wife,—fifty years old next October. Her father planted it in the morning, and in the evening she came into the world. My wife's father was my predecessor here, and I cannot tell you how fond he was of that tree; and it is fully as dear to me. Under the shade of that very tree, upon a log of wood, my wife was seated knitting when I, a poor student, came into this court for the first time, just seven and twenty years ago." Charlotte inquired for his daughter. He said she was gone with Herr Schmidt to the meadows, and was with the haymakers. The old man then resumed his story, and told us how his predecessor had taken a fancy to him, as had his daughter likewise; and how he had become first his curate, and subsequently his successor. He had scarcely finished his story when his daughter returned through the garden, accompanied by the above-mentioned Herr Schmidt. She welcomed Charlotte affectionately, and I confess I was much taken with her appearance. She was a lively-looking, good-humoured brunette, quite competent to amuse one for a short time in the country. Her lover (for such Herr Schmidt evidently appeared to be) was a polite, reserved personage, and would not join our conversation, notwithstanding all

Charlotte's endeavours to draw him out. I was much annoyed at observing, by his countenance, that his silence did not arise from want of talent, but from caprice and ill-humour. This subsequently became very evident, when we set out to take a walk, and Frederica joining Charlotte, with whom I was talking, the worthy gentleman's face, which was naturally rather sombre, became so dark and angry that Charlotte was obliged to touch my arm and remind me that I was talking too much to Frederica. Nothing distresses me more than to see men torment each other; particularly when in the flower of their age, in the very season of pleasure, they waste their few short days of sunshine in quarrels and disputes, and only perceive their error when it is too late to repair it. This thought dwelt upon my mind; and in the evening. when we returned to the vicar's, and were sitting round the table with our bread and milk, the conversation turned on the joys and sorrows of the world, I could not resist the temptation to inveigh bitterly against ill-humour. "We are apt," said I, "to complain, but with very little cause, that our happy days are few and our evil days many. If our hearts were always disposed to receive the benefits Heaven sends us, we should acquire strength to support evil when it comes," "But," observed the vicar's wife, "we cannot always command our tempers, so much depends upon the constitution; when the body suffers, the mind is ill at ease." "I acknowledge that," I continued; "but we must consider such a disposition in the light of a disease, and inquire whether there is no remedy for it." "I should be glad to hear one," said Charlotte. "At least, I think very much depends upon ourselves; I know it is so with me. When anything annoys me, and disturbs my temper, I hasten into the garden, hum a couple of country dances, and it is all right with me directly." "That is what I meant," I replied. "Ill-humour resembles indolence: it is natural to us; but if once we have courage to exert ourselves, we find our work run fresh from our hands, and we experience in the activity from which we shrank a real enjoyment." Frederica listened very attentively; and the young man objected that we were not masters of ourselves, and still less so of our feelings. "The ques-

tion is about a disagreeable feeling," I added, "from which every one would willingly escape, but none know their own power without trial. Invalids are glad to consult physicians, and submit to the most scrupulous regimen, the most nauseous medicines, in order to recover their health." I observed that the good old man inclined his head, and exerted himself to hear our discourse; so I raised my voice, and addressed myself directly to him. "We preach against a great many crimes," I observed, "but I never remember a sermon delivered against ill-humour." "That may do very well for your town clergymen," said he; "country people are never ill-humoured, though, indeed, it might be useful occasionally,—to my wife, for instance, and the judge." We all laughed, as did he likewise very cordially, till he fell into a fit of coughing, which interrupted our conversation for a time. Herr Schmidt resumed the subject. "You call ill-humour a crime," he remarked, "but I think you use too strong a term." "Not at all," I replied, "if that deserves the name which is so pernicious to ourselves and our neighbours. Is it not enough that we want the power to make one another happy,—must we deprive each other of the pleasure which we can all make for ourselves? Show me the man who has the courage to hide his ill-humour, who bears the whole burden himself without disturbing the peace of those around him. No; ill-humour arises from an inward consciousness of our own want of merit,—from a discontent which ever accompanies that envy which foolish vanity engenders. We see people happy whom we have not made so, and cannot endure the sight." Charlotte looked at me with a smile; she observed the emotion with which I spoke; and a tear in the eyes of Frederica stimulated me to proceed. "Woe unto those," I said, "who use their power over a human heart to destroy the simple pleasures it would naturally enjoy! All the favours, all the attentions, in the world cannot compensate for the loss of that happiness which a cruel tyranny has destroyed." My heart was full as I spoke. A recollection of many things which had happened pressed upon my mind, and filled my eyes with tears. "We should daily repeat to ourselves," I exclaimed, "that we should not interfere with our friends,

unless to leave them in possession of their own joys, and increase their happiness by sharing it with them! But when their souls are tormented by a violent passion, or their hearts rent with grief, is it in your power to afford them the slightest consolation?

"And when the last fatal malady seizes the being whose untimely grave you have prepared, when she lies languid and exhausted before you, her dim eyes raised to heaven, and the damp of death upon her pallid brow,—then you stand at her bedside like a condemned criminal, with the bitter feeling that your whole fortune could not save her; and the agonizing thought wrings you that all your efforts are powerless to impart even a moment's strength to the departing soul, or quicken her with a transitory consolation."

At these words the remembrance of a similar scene at which I had been once present fell with full force upon my heart. I buried my face in my handkerchief, and hastened from the room, and was only recalled to my recollection by Charlotte's voice, who reminded me that it was time to return home. With what tenderness she chid me on the way for the too eager interest I took in everything! She declared it would do me injury, and that I ought to spare myself. Yes, my angel! I will do so for your sake.

JULY 6.

She is still with her dying friend, and is still the same bright, beautiful creature whose presence softens pain, and sheds happiness around whichever way she turns. She went out yesterday with her little sisters: I knew it, and went to meet them; and we walked together. In about an hour and a half we returned to the town. We stopped at the spring I am so fond of, and which is now a thousand times dearer to me than ever. Charlotte seated herself upon the low wall, and we gathered about her. I looked round, and recalled the time when my heart was unoccupied and free. "Dear fountain," I said, "since that time I have no more come to enjoy cool repose by thy fresh stream; I have passed thee with careless steps, and scarcely bestowed a glance upon thee." I looked down, and observed Charlotte's little sister, Jane, coming up the steps with a glass of water. I

turned towards Charlotte, and I felt her influence over me. Jane at the moment approached with the glass. Her sister, Marianne, wished to take it from her. "No!" cried the child, with the sweetest expression of face, "Charlotte must drink first."

The affection and simplicity with which this was uttered so charmed me that I sought to express my feelings by catching up the child and kissing her heartily. She was frightened, and began to cry. "You should not do that," said Charlotte. I felt perplexed. "Come, Jane," she continued, taking her hand and leading her down the steps again, "it is no matter; wash yourself quickly in the fresh water."

I stood and watched them; and when I saw the little dear rubbing her cheeks with her wet hands, in full belief that all the impurities contracted from my ugly beard would be washed off by the miraculous water, and how, though Charlotte said it would do, she continued still to wash with all her might, as though she thought too much were better than too little, I assure you, Wilhelm, I never attended a baptism with greater reverence; and when Charlotte came up from the well, I could have prostrated myself as before the prophet of an Eastern nation.

In the evening I could not resist telling the story to a person who, I thought, possessed some natural feeling, because he was a man of understanding. But what a mistake I made! He maintained it was very wrong of Charlotte,—that we should not deceive children,—that such things occasioned countless mistakes and superstitions, from which we were bound to protect the young. It occurred to me, then, that this very man had been baptized only a week before; so I said nothing further, but maintained the justice of my own convictions. We should deal with children as God deals with us,—we are happiest under the influence of innocent delusions.

JULY 8.

What a child is man that he should be so solicitous about a look! What a child is man! We had been to Walheim: the ladies went in a carriage; but during our walk I thought

I saw in Charlotte's dark eyes—I am a fool—but forgive me! you should see them,—those eyes. However, to be brief (for my own eyes are weighed down with sleep), you must know, when the ladies stepped into their carriage again, young W. Seldstadt, Andran, and I were standing about the door. They are a merry set of fellows, and they were all laughing and joking together. I watched Charlotte's eyes. They wandered from one to the other; but they did not light on me,—on me, who stood there motionless, and who saw nothing but her! My heart bade her a thousand times adieu, but she noticed me not. The carriage drove off, and my eyes filled with tears. I looked after her: suddenly I saw Charlotte's bonnet leaning out of the window, and she turned to look back,—was it at me? My dear friend, I know not; and in this uncertainty I find consolation. Perhaps she turned to look at me. Perhaps! Good-night—what a child I am!

JULY 10.

You should see how foolish I look in company when her name is mentioned, particularly when I am asked plainly how I like her. How I like her!—I detest the phrase. What sort of creature must he be who merely liked Charlotte, whose whole heart and senses were not entirely absorbed by her? Like her! Some one asked me lately how I liked Ossian.

JULY 11.

Madame M—— is very ill. I pray for her recovery, because Charlotte shares my sufferings. I see her occasionally at my friend's house, and to-day she has told me the strangest circumstance. Old M—— is a covetous, miserly fellow, who has long worried and annoyed the poor lady sadly; but she has borne her afflictions patiently. A few days ago, when the physician informed us that her recovery was hopeless, she sent for her husband (Charlotte was present), and addressed him thus: "I have something to confess which after my decease may occasion trouble and confusion. I have hitherto conducted your household as frugally and economically as possible, but you must

pardon me for having defrauded you for thirty years. At the commencement of our married life you allowed a small sum for the wants of the kitchen and the other household expenses. When our establishment increased and our property grew larger I could not persuade you to increase the weekly allowance in proportion. In short, you know that when our wants were greatest, you required me to supply everything with seven florins a week. I took the money from you without an observation, but made up the weekly deficiency from the money-chest—as nobody would suspect your wife of robbing the household bank. But I wasted nothing, and should have been content to meet my eternal judge without this confession, if she, upon whom the management of your establishment will devolve after my decease, would be free from embarrassment upon your insisting that the allowance made to me, your former wife, was sufficient."

I talked with Charlotte of the inconceivable manner in which men allow themselves to be blinded: how any one could avoid suspecting some deception, when seven florins only were allowed to defray expenses twice as great. But I have myself known people who believed, without any visible astonishment, that their house possessed the prophet's never-failing cruse of oil.

JULY 13.

No, I am not deceived. In her dark eyes I read a genuine interest in me and in my fortunes. Yes, I feel it; and I may believe my own heart which tells me—dare I say it?—dare I pronounce the divine words?—that she loves me!

That she loves me! How the idea exalts me in my own eyes! And as you can understand my feelings, I may say to you, how I honour myself since she loves me!

Is this presumption, or is it a consciousness of the truth? I do not know a man able to supplant me in the heart of Charlotte; and yet when she speaks of her betrothed with so much warmth and affection, I feel like the soldier who has been stripped of his honours and titles, and deprived of his sword.

JULY 16.

How my heart beats when by accident I touch her finger, or my feet meet hers under the table! I draw back as if from a furnace; but a secret force impels me forward again, and my senses become disordered. Her innocent, unconscious heart never knows what agony these little familiarities inflict upon me. Sometimes when we are talking she lays her hand upon mine, and in the eagerness of conversation comes closer to me, and her balmy breath reaches my lips,—when I feel as if lightning had struck me, and that I could sink into the earth. And yet, Wilhelm, with all this heavenly confidence,—if I know myself, and should ever dare—you understand me. No, no! my heart is not so corrupt,—it is weak, weak enough—but is not that a degree of corruption?

She is to me a sacred being. All passion is still in her presence; I cannot express my sensations when I am near her. I feel as if my soul beat in every nerve of my body. There is a melody which she plays on the piano with angelic skill,—so simple is it, and yet so spiritual! It is her favourite air; and when she plays the first note, all pain, care, and sorrow disappear from me in a moment.

I believe every word that is said of the magic of ancient music. How her simple song enchants me! Sometimes, when I am ready to commit suicide, she sings that air; and instantly the gloom and madness which hung over me are dispersed, and I breathe freely again.

JULY 18.

Wilhelm, what is the world to our hearts without love? What is a magic-lantern without light? You have but to kindle the flame within, and the brightest figures shine on the white wall; and if love only show us fleeting shadows, we are yet happy, when, like mere children, we behold them, and are transported with the splendid phantoms. I have not been able to see Charlotte to-day. I was prevented by company from which I could not disengage myself. What was to be done? I sent my servant to her house, that I might at least see somebody to-day who had been near her. Oh, the impatience with which I waited for his return,

the joy with which I welcomed him! I should certainly have caught him in my arms, and kissed him, if I had not been ashamed.

It is said that the Bonona stone, when placed in the sun, attracts the rays, and for a time appears luminous in the the dark. So was it with me and this servant. The idea that Charlotte's eyes had dwelt on his countenance, his cheek, his very apparel, endeared them all inestimably to me, so that at the moment I would not have parted from him for a thousand crowns. His presence made me so happy! Beware of laughing at me, Wilhelm. Can that be a delusion which makes us happy?

JULY 19.

"I shall see her to-day!" I exclaim with delight, when I rise in the morning, and look out with gladness of heart at the bright, beautiful sun. "I shall see her to-day!" and then I have no further wish to form; all, all is included in that one thought.

JULY 20.

I cannot assent to your proposal that I should accompany the ambassador to ——. I do not love subordination; and we all know that he is a rough, disagreeable person to be connected with. You say my mother wishes me to be employed. I could not help laughing at that. Am I not sufficiently employed? And is it not in reality the same, whether I shell pease or count lentils? The world runs on from one folly to another; and the man who, solely from regard to the opinion of others, and without any wish or necessity of his own, toils after gold, honour, or any other phantom, is no better than a fool.

JULY 24.

You insist so much on my not neglecting my drawing, that it would be as well for me to say nothing as to confess how little I have lately done.

I never felt happier, I never understood Nature better, even down to the veriest stem or smallest blade of grass; and yet I am unable to express myself: my powers of exe-

cution are so weak, everything seems to swim and float before me, so that I cannot make a clear, bold outline. But I fancy I should succeed better if I had some clay or wax to model. I shall try, if this state of mind continues much longer, and will take to modelling, if I only knead dough.

I have commenced Charlotte's portrait three times, and have as often disgraced myself. This is the more annoying, as I was formerly very happy in taking likenesses. I have since sketched her profile, and must content myself with that.

JULY 25.

Yes, dear Charlotte! I will order and arrange everything. Only give me more commissions, the more the better. One thing, however, I must request: use no more writing-sand with the dear notes you send me. To-day I raised your letter hastily to my lips, and it set my teeth on edge.

JULY 26.

I have often determined not to see her so frequently. But who could keep such a resolution? Every day I am exposed to the temptation, and promise faithfully that to-morrow I will really stay away; but when to-morrow comes, I find some irresistible reason for seeing her; and before I can account for it, I am with her again. Either she has said on the previous evening, "You will be sure to call to-morrow,"—and who could stay away then?—or she gives me some commission, and I find it essential to take her the answer in person; or the day is fine, and I walk to Walheim; and when I am there, it is only half a league farther to her. I am within the charmed atmosphere, and soon find myself at her side. My grandmother used to tell us a story of a mountain of loadstone. When any vessels came near it, they were instantly deprived of their iron-work; the nails flew to the mountain, and the unhappy crew perished amidst the disjointed planks.

JULY 30.

Albert is arrived, and I must take my departure. Were he the best and noblest of men, and I in every respect his inferior, I could not endure to see him in possession of

such a perfect being. Possession!—enough, Wilhelm; her betrothed is here,—a fine, worthy fellow, whom one cannot help liking. Fortunately I was not present at their meeting. It would have broken my heart! And he is so considerate: he has not given Charlotte one kiss in my presence. Heaven reward him for it! I must love him for the respect with which he treats her. He shows a regard for me; but for this I suspect I am more indebted to Charlotte than to his own fancy for me. Women have a delicate tact in such matters, and it should be so. They cannot always succeed in keeping two rivals on terms with each other; but when they do, they are the only gainers.

I cannot help esteeming Albert. The coolness of his temper contrasts strongly with the impetuosity of mine, which I cannot conceal. He has a great deal of feeling, and is fully sensible of the treasure he possesses in Charlotte. He is free from ill-humour, which you know is the fault I detest most.

He regards me as a man of sense; and my attachment to Charlotte, and the interest I take in all that concerns her, augment his triumph and his love. I shall not inquire whether he may not at times tease her with some little jealousies; as I know that, were I in his place, I should not be entirely free from such sensations.

But, be that as it may, my pleasure with Charlotte is over. Call it folly or infatuation, what signifies a name? The thing speaks for itself. Before Albert came, I knew all that I know now. I knew I could make no pretensions to her, nor did I offer any,—that is, as far as it was possible, in the presence of so much loveliness, not to pant for its enjoyment. And now behold me, like a silly fellow, staring with astonishment when another comes in, and deprives me of my love.

I bite my lips, and feel infinite scorn for those who tell me to be resigned, because there is no help for it. Let me escape from the yoke of such silly subterfuges! I ramble through the woods; and when I return to Charlotte, and find Albert sitting by her side in the summer-house in the garden, I am unable to bear it, behave like a fool, and commit a thousand extravagances. "For Heaven's sake,"

said Charlotte to-day, "let us have no more scenes like those of last night! You terrify me when you are so violent." Between ourselves, I am always away now when he visits her; and I feel delighted when I find her alone.

AUG. 8.

Believe me, dear Wilhelm, I did not allude to you when I spoke so severely of those who advise resignation to inevitable fate. I did not think it possible for you to indulge such a sentiment. But in fact you are right. I only suggest one objection. In this world one is seldom reduced to make a selection between two alternatives. There are as many varieties of conduct and opinion as there are turns of feature between an aquiline nose and a flat one.

You will, therefore, permit me to concede your entire argument, and yet contrive means to escape your dilemma.

Your position is this, I hear you say: "Either you have hopes of obtaining Charlotte, or you have none. Well, in the first case, pursue your course, and press on to the fulfilment of your wishes. In the second, be a man, and shake off a miserable passion, which will enervate and destroy you." My dear friend, this is well and easily said.

But would you require a wretched being, whose life is slowly wasting under a lingering disease, to despatch himself at once by the stroke of a dagger? Does not the very disorder which consumes his strength deprive him of the courage to effect his deliverance?

You may answer me, if you please, with a similar analogy: "Who would not prefer the amputation of an arm to the perilling of life by doubt and procrastination?" But I know not if I am right, and let us leave these comparisons.

Enough! There are moments, Wilhelm, when I could rise up and shake it all off, and when, if I only knew where to go, I could fly from this place.

THE SAME EVENING.

My diary, which I have for some time neglected, came before me to-day; and I am amazed to see how deliberately I have entangled myself step by step. To have seen my position so clearly, and yet to have acted so like a child!

Even still I behold the result plainly, and yet have no thought of acting with greater prudence.

AUG. 10.

If I were not a fool, I could spend the happiest and most delightful life here. So many agreeable circumstances, and of a kind to insure a worthy man's happiness, are seldom united. Alas! I feel it too sensibly,—the heart alone makes our happiness! To be admitted into this most charming family, to be loved by the father as a son, by the children as a father, and by Charlotte!—then the noble Albert, who never disturbs my happiness by any appearance of ill-humour, receiving me with the heartiest affection, and loving me, next to Charlotte, better than all the world! Wilhelm, you would be delighted to hear us in our rambles, and conversations about Charlotte. Nothing in the world can be more absurd than our connection, and yet the thought of it often moves me to tears.

He tells me sometimes of her excellent mother; how, upon her death-bed, she had committed her house and children to Charlotte, and had given Charlotte herself in charge to him; how, since that time, a new spirit had taken possession of her; how, in care and anxiety for their welfare, she became a real mother to them: how every moment of her time was devoted to some labour of love in their behalf,—and yet her mirth and cheerfulness had never forsaken her. I walk by his side, pluck flowers by the way, arrange them carefully into a nosegay, then fling them into the first stream I pass, and watch them as they float gently away. I forgot whether I told you that Albert is to remain here. He has received a government appointment, with a very good salary; and I understand he is in high favour at court. I have met few persons so punctual and methodical in business.

AUG. 12.

Certainly Albert is the best fellow in the world. I had a strange scene with him yesterday. I went to take leave of him; for I took it into my head to spend a few days in these mountains, from where I now write to you. As I

was walking up and down his room, my eye fell upon his pistols. "Lend me those pistols," said I, "for my journey." "By all means," he replied, "if you will take the trouble to load them; for they only hang there for form." I took down one of them; and he continued: "Ever since I was near suffering from my extreme caution, I will have nothing to do with such things." I was curious to hear the story. "I was staying," said he, "some three months ago, at a friend's house in the country. I had a brace of pistols with me, unloaded; and I slept without any anxiety. One rainy afternoon I was sitting by myself, doing nothing, when it occurred to me—I do not know how—that the house might be attacked, that we might require the pistols, that we might —in short, you know how we go on fancying, when we have nothing better to do. I gave the pistols to the servant, to clean and load. He was playing with the maid, and trying to frighten her, when the pistol went off—God knows how!—the ramrod was in the barrel; and it went straight through her right hand, and shattered the thumb. I had to endure all the lamentation, and to pay the surgeon's bill; so, since that time, I have kept all my weapons unloaded. But, my dear friend, what is the use of prudence? We can never be on our guard against all possible dangers. However,"—now, you must know I can tolerate all men till they come to "however;" for it is self-evident that every universal rule must have its exceptions. But he is so exceedingly accurate that if he only fancies he has said a word too precipitate or too general or only half true, he never ceases to qualify, to modify, and extenuate, till at last he appears to have said nothing at all. Upon this occasion Albert was deeply immersed in his subject: I ceased to listen to him, and became lost in reverie. With a sudden motion I pointed the mouth of the pistol to my forehead, over the right eye. "What do you mean?" cried Albert, turning back the pistol. "It is not loaded," said I. "And even if not," he answered with impatience, "what can you mean? I cannot comprehend how a man can be so mad as to shoot himself; and the bare idea of it shocks me."

"But why should any one," said I, "in speaking of an action, venture to pronounce it mad or wise, or good or bad?

What is the meaning of all this? Have you carefully studied the secret motives of our actions? Do you understand—can you explain the causes which occasion them, and make them inevitable? If you can, you will be less hasty with your decision."

"But you will allow," said Albert, "that some actions are criminal, let them spring from whatever motives they may." I granted it, and shrugged my shoulders.

"But still, my good friend," I continued, "there are some exceptions here too. Theft is a crime; but the man who commits it from extreme poverty, with no design but to save his family from perishing, is he an object of pity or of punishment? Who shall throw the first stone at a husband who in the heat of just resentment sacrifices his faithless wife and her perfidious seducer; or at the young maiden who in her weak hour of rapture forgets herself in the impetuous joys of love? Even our laws, cold and cruel as they are, relent in such cases, and withhold their punishment."

"That is quite another thing," said Albert; "because a man under the influence of violent passion loses all power of reflection, and is regarded as intoxicated or insane."

"Oh, you people of sound understandings," I replied, smiling, "are ever ready to exclaim, 'Extravagance, and madness, and intoxication!' You moral men are so calm and so subdued! You abhor the drunken man, and detest the extravagant; you pass by, like the Levite, and thank God, like the Pharisee, that you are not like one of them. I have been more than once intoxicated, my passions have always bordered on extravagance: I am not ashamed to confess it; for I have learned, by my own experience, that all extraordinary men, who have accomplished great and astonishing actions, have ever been decried by the world as drunken or insane. And in private life, too, is it not intolerable that no one can undertake the execution of a noble or generous deed, without giving rise to the exclamation that the doer is intoxicated or mad? Shame upon you, ye sages!"

"This is another of your extravagant humours," said Albert: "you always exaggerate a case, and in this matter

you are undoubtedly wrong; for we were speaking of suicide, which you compare with great actions, when it is impossible to regard it as anything but a weakness. It is much easier to die than to bear a life of misery with fortitude."

I was on the point of breaking off the conversation, for nothing puts me so completely out of patience as the utterance of a wretched commonplace when I am talking from my inmost heart. However, I composed myself, for I had often heard the same observation with sufficient vexation; and I answered him, therefore, with a little warmth, "You call this a weakness,—beware of being led astray by appearances.

"When a nation which has long groaned under the intolerable yoke of a tyrant rises at last and throws off its chains, do you call that weakness? The man who, to rescue his house from the flames, finds his physical strength redoubled, so that he lifts burdens with ease which in the absence of excitement he could scarcely move; he who under the rage of an insult attacks and puts to flight half a score of his enemies,—are such persons to be called weak? My good friend, if resistance be strength, how can the highest degree of resistance be a weakness?"

Albert looked steadfastly at me, and said, "Pray forgive me, but I do not see that the examples you have adduced bear any relation to the question." "Very likely," I answered; "for I have often been told that my style of illustration borders a little on the absurd. But let us see if we cannot place the matter in another point of view, by inquiring what can be a man's state of mind who resolves to free himself from the burden of life,—a burden often so pleasant to bear,—for we cannot otherwise reason fairly upon the subject.

"Human nature," I continued, "has its limits. It is able to endure a certain degree of joy, sorrow, and pain, but becomes annihilated as soon as this measure is exceeded. The question, therefore, is, not whether a man is strong or weak, but whether he is able to endure the measure of his sufferings. The suffering may be moral or physical; and in my opinion it is just as absurd to call a man a

coward who destroys himself, as to call a man a coward who dies of a malignant fever."

"Paradox, all paradox!" exclaimed Albert. "Not so paradoxical as you imagine," I replied. "You allow that we designate a disease as mortal when Nature is so severely attacked, and her strength so far exhausted, that she cannot possibly recover her former condition under any change that may take place.

"Now, my good friend, apply this to the mind; observe a man in his natural, isolated condition; consider how ideas work, and how impressions fasten on him, till at length a violent passion seizes him, destroying all his powers of calm reflection, and utterly ruining him.

"It is in vain that a man of sound mind and cool temper understands the condition of such a wretched being, in vain he counsels him. He can no more communicate his own wisdom to him than a healthy man can instil his strength into the invalid by whose bedside he is seated."

Albert thought this too general. I reminded him of a girl who had drowned herself a short time previously, and I related her history.

She was a good creature, who had grown up in the narrow sphere of household industry and weekly-appointed labour; one who knew no pleasure beyond indulging in a walk on Sundays, arrayed in her best attire, accompanied by her friends, or perhaps joining in the dance now and then at some festival, and chatting away her spare hours with a neighbour, discussing the scandal or the quarrels of the village,—trifles sufficient to occupy her heart. At length the warmth of her nature is influenced by certain new and unknown wishes. Inflamed by the flatteries of men, her former pleasures become by degrees insipid, till at length she meets with a youth to whom she is atracted by an indescribable feeling; upon him she now rests all her hopes; she forgets the world around her; she sees, hears, desires nothing but him, and him only. He alone occupies all her thoughts. Uncorrupted by the idle indulgence of an enervating vanity, her affection moving steadily towards its object, she hopes to become his, and to realise, in an everlasting union with him, all that happiness which she sought,

all that bliss for which she longed. His repeated promises confirm her hopes: embraces and endearments, which increase the ardour of her desires, overmaster her soul. She floats in a dim, delusive anticipation of her happiness; and her feelings become excited to their utmost tension. She stretches out her arms finally to embrace the object of all her wishes—and her lover forsakes her. Stunned and bewildered, she stands upon a precipice. All is darkness around her.

No prospect, no hope, no consolation,—forsaken by him in whom her existence was centred! She sees nothing of the wide world before her, thinks nothing of the many individuals who might supply the void in her heart; she feels herself deserted, forsaken by the world; and, blinded and impelled by the agony which wrings her soul, she plunges into the deep, to end her sufferings in the broad embrace of death. See here, Albert, the history of thousands; and tell me, is not this a case of physical infirmity? Nature has no way to escape from the labyrinth: her powers are exhausted; she can contend no longer, and the poor soul must die.

"Shame upon him who can look on calmly, and exclaim, 'The foolish girl! she should have waited; she should have allowed time to wear off the impression; her despair would have been softened, and she would have found another lover to comfort her.' One might as well say, 'The fool, to die of a fever! why did he not wait till his strength was restored, till his blood became calm? All would then have gone well, and he would have been alive now.'"

Albert, who could not see the justice of the comparison, offered some further objections, and, amongst others, urged that I had taken the case of a mere ignorant girl. But how any man of sense, of more enlarged views and experience, could be excused, he was unable to comprehend. "My friend!" I exclaimed, "man is but man; and, whatever be the extent of his reasoning powers, they are of little avail when passion rages within, and he feels himself confined by the narrow limits of Nature. It were better, then— But we will talk of this some other time," I said, and caught up my hat. Alas! my heart was full; and we parted with-

our conviction on either side. How rarely in this world do men understand each other!

AUG. 15.

There can be no doubt that in this world nothing is so indispensable as love. I observe that Charlotte could not lose me without a pang, and the very children have but one wish: that is, that I should visit them again to-morrow. I went this afternoon to tune Charlotte's piano. But I could not do it, for the little ones insisted on my telling them a story, and Charlotte herself urged me to satisfy them. I waited upon them at tea, and they are now as fully contented with me as with Charlotte; and I told them my very best tale of the princess who was waited upon by dwarfs. I improve myself by this exercise, and am quite surprised at the impression my stories create. If I sometimes invent an incident which I forget upon the next narration, they remind me directly that the story was different before; so that I now endeavour to relate with exactness the same anecdote in the same monotonous tone which never changes. I find by this, how much an author injures his works by altering them, even though they be improved in a poetical point of view. The first impression is readily received. We are so constituted that we believe the most incredible things; and, once they are engraved upon the memory, woe to him who would endeavour to efface them.

AUG. 18.

Must it ever be thus,—that the source of our happiness must also be the fountain of our misery? The full and ardent sentiment which animated my heart with the love of Nature, overwhelming me with a torrent of delight, and which brought all paradise before me, has now become an insupportable torment,—a demon which perpetually pursues and harasses me. When in by-gone days I gazed from these rocks upon yonder mountains across the river, and upon the green, flowery valley before me, and saw all Nature budding and bursting around; the hills clothed from foot to peak with tall, thick forest trees; the valleys in all their varied windings, shaded with the loveliest woods; and

the soft river gliding along amongst the lisping reeds, mirroring the beautiful clouds which the soft evening breeze wafted across the sky,—when I heard the groves about me melodious with the music of birds, and saw the million swarms of insects dancing in the last golden beams of the sun, whose setting rays awoke the humming beetles from their grassy beds, whilst the subdued tumult around directed my attention to the ground, and I there observed the arid rock compelled to yield nutriment to the dry moss, whilst the heath flourished upon the barren sands below me,—all this displayed to me the inner warmth which animates all nature, and filled and glowed within my heart. I felt myself exalted by this overflowing fulness to the perception of the Godhead, and the glorious forms of an infinite universe became visible to my soul! Stupendous mountains encompassed me, abysses yawned at my feet, and cataracts fell headlong down before me; impetuous rivers rolled through the plain, and rocks and mountains resounded from afar. In the depths of the earth I saw innumerable powers in motion, and multiplying to infinity; whilst upon its surface, and beneath the heavens, there teemed ten thousand varieties of living creatures. Everything around is alive with an infinite number of forms; while mankind fly for security to their petty houses, from the shelter of which they rule in their imaginations over the wide-extended universe. Poor fool! in whose petty estimation all things are little. From the inaccessible mountains, across the desert which no mortal foot has trod, far as the confines of the unknown ocean, breathes the spirit of the eternal Creator; and every atom to which he has given existence finds favour in his sight. Ah, how often at that time has the flight of a bird, soaring above my head, inspired me with the desire of being transported to the shores of the immeasurable waters, there to quaff the pleasures of life from the foaming goblet of the Infinite, and to partake, if but for a moment even, with the confined powers of my soul, the beatitude of that Creator who accomplishes all things in himself, and through himself!

My dear friend, the bare recollection of those hours still consoles me. Even this effort to recall those ineffable sen-

such a perfect being. Possession!—enough, Wilhelm; her betrothed is here,—a fine, worthy fellow, whom one cannot help liking. Fortunately I was not present at their meeting. It would have broken my heart! And he is so considerate: he has not given Charlotte one kiss in my presence. Heaven reward him for it! I must love him for the respect with which he treats her. He shows a regard for me; but for this I suspect I am more indebted to Charlotte than to his own fancy for me. Women have a delicate tact in such matters, and it should be so. They cannot always succeed in keeping two rivals on terms with each other; but when they do, they are the only gainers.

I cannot help esteeming Albert. The coolness of his temper contrasts strongly with the impetuosity of mine, which I cannot conceal. He has a great deal of feeling, and is fully sensible of the treasure he possesses in Charlotte. He is free from ill-humour, which you know is the fault I detest most.

He regards me as a man of sense; and my attachment to Charlotte, and the interest I take in all that concerns her, augment his triumph and his love. I shall not inquire whether he may not at times tease her with some little jealousies; as I know that, were I in his place, I should not be entirely free from such sensations.

But, be that as it may, my pleasure with Charlotte is over. Call it folly or infatuation, what signifies a name? The thing speaks for itself. Before Albert came, I knew all that I know now. I knew I could make no pretensions to her, nor did I offer any,—that is, as far as it was possible, in the presence of so much loveliness, not to pant for its enjoyment. And now behold me, like a silly fellow, staring with astonishment when another comes in, and deprives me of my love.

I bite my lips, and feel infinite scorn for those who tell me to be resigned, because there is no help for it. Let me escape from the yoke of such silly subterfuges! I ramble through the woods; and when I return to Charlotte, and find Albert sitting by her side in the summer-house in the garden, I am unable to bear it, behave like a fool, and commit a thousand extravagances. "For Heaven's sake,"

said Charlotte to-day, "let us have no more scenes like those of last night! You terrify me when you are so violent." Between ourselves, I am always away now when he visits her; and I feel delighted when I find her alone.

AUG. 8.

Believe me, dear Wilhelm, I did not allude to you when I spoke so severely of those who advise resignation to inevitable fate. I did not think it possible for you to indulge such a sentiment. But in fact you are right. I only suggest one objection. In this world one is seldom reduced to make a selection between two alternatives. There are as many varieties of conduct and opinion as there are turns of feature between an aquiline nose and a flat one.

You will, therefore, permit me to concede your entire argument, and yet contrive means to escape your dilemma.

Your position is this, I hear you say: "Either you have hopes of obtaining Charlotte, or you have none. Well, in the first case, pursue your course, and press on to the fulfilment of your wishes. In the second, be a man, and shake off a miserable passion, which will enervate and destroy you." My dear friend, this is well and easily said.

But would you require a wretched being, whose life is slowly wasting under a lingering disease, to despatch himself at once by the stroke of a dagger? Does not the very disorder which consumes his strength deprive him of the courage to effect his deliverance?

You may answer me, if you please, with a similar analogy: "Who would not prefer the amputation of an arm to the perilling of life by doubt and procrastination?" But I know not if I am right, and let us leave these comparisons.

Enough! There are moments, Wilhelm, when I could rise up and shake it all off, and when, if I only knew where to go, I could fly from this place.

THE SAME EVENING.

My diary, which I have for some time neglected, came before me to-day; and I am amazed to see how deliberately I have entangled myself step by step. To have seen my position so clearly, and yet to have acted so like a child!

Even still I behold the result plainly, and yet have no thought of acting with greater prudence.

AUG. 10.

If I were not a fool, I could spend the happiest and most delightful life here. So many agreeable circumstances, and of a kind to insure a worthy man's happiness, are seldom united. Alas! I feel it too sensibly,—the heart alone makes our happiness! To be admitted into this most charming family, to be loved by the father as a son, by the children as a father, and by Charlotte!—then the noble Albert, who never disturbs my happiness by any appearance of ill-humour, receiving me with the heartiest affection, and loving me, next to Charlotte, better than all the world! Wilhelm, you would be delighted to hear us in our rambles, and conversations about Charlotte. Nothing in the world can be more absurd than our connection, and yet the thought of it often moves me to tears.

He tells me sometimes of her excellent mother; how, upon her death-bed, she had committed her house and children to Charlotte, and had given Charlotte herself in charge to him; how, since that time, a new spirit had taken possession of her; how, in care and anxiety for their welfare, she became a real mother to them; how every moment of her time was devoted to some labour of love in their behalf,—and yet her mirth and cheerfulness had never forsaken her. I walk by his side, pluck flowers by the way, arrange them carefully into a nosegay, then fling them into the first stream I pass, and watch them as they float gently away. I forgot whether I told you that Albert is to remain here. He has received a government appointment, with a very good salary; and I understand he is in high favour at court. I have met few persons so punctual and methodical in business.

AUG. 12.

Certainly Albert is the best fellow in the world. I had a strange scene with him yesterday. I went to take leave of him; for I took it into my head to spend a few days in these mountains, from where I now write to you. As I

was walking up and down his room, my eye fell upon his pistols. "Lend me those pistols," said I, "for my journey." "By all means," he replied, "if you will take the trouble to load them; for they only hang there for form." I took down one of them; and he continued: "Ever since I was near suffering from my extreme caution, I will have nothing to do with such things." I was curious to hear the story. "I was staying," said he, "some three months ago, at a friend's house in the country. I had a brace of pistols with me, unloaded; and I slept without any anxiety. One rainy afternoon I was sitting by myself, doing nothing, when it occurred to me—I do not know how—that the house might be attacked, that we might require the pistols, that we might —in short, you know how we go on fancying, when we have nothing better to do. I gave the pistols to the servant, to clean and load. He was playing with the maid, and trying to frighten her, when the pistol went off—God knows how!—the ramrod was in the barrel; and it went straight through her right hand, and shattered the thumb. I had to endure all the lamentation, and to pay the surgeon's bill; so, since that time, I have kept all my weapons unloaded. But, my dear friend, what is the use of prudence? We can never be on our guard against all possible dangers. However,"—now, you must know I can tolerate all men till they come to "however;" for it is self-evident that every universal rule must have its exceptions. But he is so exceedingly accurate that if he only fancies he has said a word too precipitate or too general or only half true, he never ceases to qualify, to modify, and extenuate, till at last he appears to have said nothing at all. Upon this occasion Albert was deeply immersed in his subject: I ceased to listen to him, and became lost in reverie. With a sudden motion I pointed the mouth of the pistol to my forehead, over the right eye. "What do you mean?" cried Albert, turning back the pistol. "It is not loaded," said I. "And even if not," he answered with impatience, "what can you mean? I cannot comprehend how a man can be so mad as to shoot himself; and the bare idea of it shocks me."

"But why should any one," said I, "in speaking of an action, venture to pronounce it mad or wise, or good or bad?

tion is about a disagreeable feeling," I added, "from which every one would willingly escape, but none know their own power without trial. Invalids are glad to consult physicians, and submit to the most scrupulous regimen, the most nauseous medicines, in order to recover their health." I observed that the good old man inclined his head, and exerted himself to hear our discourse; so I raised my voice, and addressed myself directly to him. "We preach against a great many crimes," I observed, "but I never remember a sermon delivered against ill-humour." "That may do very well for your town clergymen," said he; "country people are never ill-humoured, though, indeed, it might be useful occasionally,—to my wife, for instance, and the judge." We all laughed, as did he likewise very cordially, till he fell into a fit of coughing, which interrupted our conversation for a time. Herr Schmidt resumed the subject. "You call ill-humour a crime," he remarked, "but I think you use too strong a term." "Not at all," I replied, "if that deserves the name which is so pernicious to ourselves and our neighbours. Is it not enough that we want the power to make one another happy,—must we deprive each other of the pleasure which we can all make for ourselves? Show me the man who has the courage to hide his ill-humour, who bears the whole burden himself without disturbing the peace of those around him. No; ill-humour arises from an inward consciousness of our own want of merit,—from a discontent which ever accompanies that envy which foolish vanity engenders. We see people happy whom we have not made so, and cannot endure the sight." Charlotte looked at me with a smile; she observed the emotion with which I spoke; and a tear in the eyes of Frederica stimulated me to proceed. "Woe unto those," I said, "who use their power over a human heart to destroy the simple pleasures it would naturally enjoy! All the favours, all the attentions, in the world cannot compensate for the loss of that happiness which a cruel tyranny has destroyed." My heart was full as I spoke. A recollection of many things which had happened pressed upon my mind, and filled my eyes with tears. "We should daily repeat to ourselves," I exclaimed, "that we should not interfere with our friends,

unless to leave them in possession of their own joys, and increase their happiness by sharing it with them! But when their souls are tormented by a violent passion, or their hearts rent with grief, is it in your power to afford them the slightest consolation?

"And when the last fatal malady seizes the being whose untimely grave you have prepared, when she lies languid and exhausted before you, her dim eyes raised to heaven, and the damp of death upon her pallid brow,—then you stand at her bedside like a condemned criminal, with the bitter feeling that your whole fortune could not save her; and the agonizing thought wrings you that all your efforts are powerless to impart even a moment's strength to the departing soul, or quicken her with a transitory consolation."

At these words the remembrance of a similar scene at which I had been once present fell with full force upon my heart. I buried my face in my handkerchief, and hastened from the room, and was only recalled to my recollection by Charlotte's voice, who reminded me that it was time to return home. With what tenderness she chid me on the way for the too eager interest I took in everything! She declared it would do me injury, and that I ought to spare myself. Yes, my angel! I will do so for your sake.

JULY 6.

She is still with her dying friend, and is still the same bright, beautiful creature whose presence softens pain, and sheds happiness around whichever way she turns. She went out yesterday with her little sisters: I knew it, and went to meet them; and we walked together. In about an hour and a half we returned to the town. We stopped at the spring I am so fond of, and which is now a thousand times dearer to me than ever. Charlotte seated herself upon the low wall, and we gathered about her. I looked round, and recalled the time when my heart was unoccupied and free. "Dear fountain," I said, "since that time I have no more come to enjoy cool repose by thy fresh stream; I have passed thee with careless steps, and scarcely bestowed a glance upon thee." I looked down, and observed Charlotte's little sister, Jane, coming up the steps with a glass of water. I

turned towards Charlotte, and I felt her influence over me. Jane at the moment approached with the glass. Her sister, Marianne, wished to take it from her. "No!" cried the child, with the sweetest expression of face, "Charlotte must drink first."

The affection and simplicity with which this was uttered so charmed me that I sought to express my feelings by catching up the child and kissing her heartily. She was frightened, and began to cry. "You should not do that," said Charlotte. I felt perplexed. "Come, Jane," she continued, taking her hand and leading her down the steps again, "it is no matter; wash yourself quickly in the fresh water."

I stood and watched them; and when I saw the little dear rubbing her cheeks with her wet hands, in full belief that all the impurities contracted from my ugly beard would be washed off by the miraculous water, and how, though Charlotte said it would do, she continued still to wash with all her might, as though she thought too much were better than too little, I assure you, Wilhelm, I never attended a baptism with greater reverence; and when Charlotte came up from the well, I could have prostrated myself as before the prophet of an Eastern nation.

In the evening I could not resist telling the story to a person who, I thought, possessed some natural feeling, because he was a man of understanding. But what a mistake I made! He maintained it was very wrong of Charlotte,—that we should not deceive children,—that such things occasioned countless mistakes and superstitions, from which we were bound to protect the young. It occurred to me, then, that this very man had been baptized only a week before; so I said nothing further, but maintained the justice of my own convictions. We should deal with children as God deals with us,—we are happiest under the influence of innocent delusions.

JULY 8.

What a child is man that he should be so solicitous about a look! What a child is man! We had been to Walheim: the ladies went in a carriage; but during our walk I thought

I saw in Charlotte's dark eyes—I am a fool—but forgive me! you should see them,—those eyes. However, to be brief (for my own eyes are weighed down with sleep), you must know, when the ladies stepped into their carriage again, young W. Seldstadt, Andran, and I were standing about the door. They are a merry set of fellows, and they were all laughing and joking together. I watched Charlotte's eyes. They wandered from one to the other; but they did not light on me,—on me, who stood there motionless, and who saw nothing but her! My heart bade her a thousand times adieu, but she noticed me not. The carriage drove off, and my eyes filled with tears. I looked after her: suddenly I saw Charlotte's bonnet leaning out of the window, and she turned to look back,—was it at me? My dear friend, I know not; and in this uncertainty I find consolation. Perhaps she turned to look at me. Perhaps! Good-night—what a child I am!

JULY 10.

You should see how foolish I look in company when her name is mentioned, particularly when I am asked plainly how I like her. How I like her!—I detest the phrase. What sort of creature must he be who merely liked Charlotte, whose whole heart and senses were not entirely absorbed by her? Like her! Some one asked me lately how I liked Ossian.

JULY 11.

Madame M—— is very ill. I pray for her recovery, because Charlotte shares my sufferings. I see her occasionally at my friend's house, and to-day she has told me the strangest circumstance. Old M—— is a covetous, miserly fellow, who has long worried and annoyed the poor lady sadly; but she has borne her afflictions patiently. A few days ago, when the physician informed us that her recovery was hopeless, she sent for her husband (Charlotte was present), and addressed him thus: "I have something to confess which after my decease may occasion trouble and confusion. I have hitherto conducted your household as frugally and economically as possible, but you must

pardon me for having defrauded you for thirty years. At the commencement of our married life you allowed a small sum for the wants of the kitchen and the other household expenses. When our establishment increased and our property grew larger, I could not persuade you to increase the weekly allowance in proportion; in short, you know that when our wants were greatest, you required me to supply everything with seven florins a week. I took the money from you without an observation, but made up the weekly deficiency from the money-chest,—as nobody would suspect your wife of robbing the household bank. But I wasted nothing, and should have been content to meet my eternal Judge without this confession, if she, upon whom the management of your establishment will devolve after my decease, would be free from embarrassment upon your insisting that the allowance made to me, your former wife, was sufficient."

I talked with Charlotte of the inconceivable manner in which men allow themselves to be blinded; how any one could avoid suspecting some deception, when seven florins only were allowed to defray expenses twice as great. But I have myself known people who believed, without any visible astonishment, that their house possessed the prophet's never-failing cruse of oil.

JULY 13.

No, I am not deceived. In her dark eyes I read a genuine interest in me and in my fortunes. Yes, I feel it; and I may believe my own heart which tells me—dare I say it?—dare I pronounce the divine words?—that she loves me!

That she loves me! How the idea exalts me in my own eyes! And as you can understand my feelings, I may say to you, how I honour myself since she loves me!

Is this presumption, or is it a consciousness of the truth? I do not know a man able to supplant me in the heart of Charlotte; and yet when she speaks of her betrothed with so much warmth and affection, I feel like the soldier who has been stripped of his honours and titles, and deprived of his sword.

JULY 16.

How my heart beats when by accident I touch her finger, or my feet meet hers under the table! I draw back as if from a furnace; but a secret force impels me forward again, and my senses become disordered. Her innocent, unconscious heart never knows what agony these little familiarities inflict upon me. Sometimes when we are talking she lays her hand upon mine, and in the eagerness of conversation comes closer to me, and her balmy breath reaches my lips,—when I feel as if lightning had struck me, and that I could sink into the earth. And yet, Wilhelm, with all this heavenly confidence,—if I know myself, and should ever dare—you understand me. No, no! my heart is not so corrupt,—it is weak, weak enough—but is not that a degree of corruption?

She is to me a sacred being. All passion is still in her presence; I cannot express my sensations when I am near her. I feel as if my soul beat in every nerve of my body. There is a melody which she plays on the piano with angelic skill,—so simple is it, and yet so spiritual! It is her favourite air; and when she plays the first note, all pain, care, and sorrow disappear from me in a moment.

I believe every word that is said of the magic of ancient music. How her simple song enchants me! Sometimes, when I am ready to commit suicide, she sings that air; and instantly the gloom and madness which hung over me are dispersed, and I breathe freely again.

JULY 18.

Wilhelm, what is the world to our hearts without love? What is a magic-lantern without light? You have but to kindle the flame within, and the brightest figures shine on the white wall; and if love only show us fleeting shadows, we are yet happy, when, like mere children, we behold them, and are transported with the splendid phantoms. I have not been able to see Charlotte to-day. I was prevented by company from which I could not disengage myself. What was to be done? I sent my servant to her house, that I might at least see somebody to-day who had been near her. Oh, the impatience with which I waited for his return,

the joy with which I welcomed him! I should certainly have caught him in my arms, and kissed him, if I had not been ashamed.

It is said that the Bonona stone, when placed in the sun, attracts the rays, and for a time appears luminous in the the dark. So was it with me and this servant. The idea that Charlotte's eyes had dwelt on his countenance, his cheek, his very apparel, endeared them all inestimably to me, so that at the moment I would not have parted from him for a thousand crowns. His presence made me so happy! Beware of laughing at me, Wilhelm. Can that be a delusion which makes us happy?

JULY 19.

"I shall see her to-day!" I exclaim with delight, when I rise in the morning, and look out with gladness of heart at the bright, beautiful sun. "I shall see her to-day!" and then I have no further wish to form; all, all is included in that one thought.

JULY 20.

I cannot assent to your proposal that I should accompany the ambassador to ——. I do not love subordination; and we all know that he is a rough, disagreeable person to be connected with. You say my mother wishes me to be employed. I could not help laughing at that. Am I not sufficiently employed? And is it not in reality the same, whether I shell pease or count lentils? The world runs on from one folly to another; and the man who, solely from regard to the opinion of others, and without any wish or necessity of his own, toils after gold, honour, or any other phantom, is no better than a fool.

JULY 24.

You insist so much on my not neglecting my drawing, that it would be as well for me to say nothing as to confess how little I have lately done.

I never felt happier, I never understood Nature better, even down to the veriest stem or smallest blade of grass; and yet I am unable to express myself: my powers of exe-

cution are so weak, everything seems to swim and float before me, so that I cannot make a clear, bold outline. But I fancy I should succeed better if I had some clay or wax to model. I shall try, if this state of mind continues much longer, and will take to modelling, if I only knead dough.

I have commenced Charlotte's portrait three times, and have as often disgraced myself. This is the more annoying, as I was formerly very happy in taking likenesses. I have since sketched her profile, and must content myself with that.

JULY 25.

Yes, dear Charlotte! I will order and arrange everything. Only give me more commissions, the more the better. One thing, however, I must request: use no more writing-sand with the dear notes you send me. To-day I raised your letter hastily to my lips, and it set my teeth on edge.

JULY 26.

I have often determined not to see her so frequently. But who could keep such a resolution? Every day I am exposed to the temptation, and promise faithfully that to-morrow I will really stay away; but when to-morrow comes, I find some irresistible reason for seeing her; and before I can account for it, I am with her again. Either she has said on the previous evening, "You will be sure to call to-morrow,"—and who could stay away then?—or she gives me some commission, and I find it essential to take her the answer in person; or the day is fine, and I walk to Walheim; and when I am there, it is only half a league farther to her. I am within the charmed atmosphere, and soon find myself at her side. My grandmother used to tell us a story of a mountain of loadstone. When any vessels came near it, they were instantly deprived of their iron-work; the nails flew to the mountain, and the unhappy crew perished amidst the disjointed planks.

JULY 30.

Albert is arrived, and I must take my departure. Were he the best and noblest of men, and I in every respect his inferior, I could not endure to see him in possession of

such a perfect being. Possession!—enough, Wilhelm; her betrothed is here,—a fine, worthy fellow, whom one cannot help liking. Fortunately I was not present at their meeting. It would have broken my heart! And he is so considerate: he has not given Charlotte one kiss in my presence. Heaven reward him for it! I must love him for the respect with which he treats her. He shows a regard for me; but for this I suspect I am more indebted to Charlotte than to his own fancy for me. Women have a delicate tact in such matters, and it should be so. They cannot always succeed in keeping two rivals on terms with each other; but when they do, they are the only gainers.

I cannot help esteeming Albert. The coolness of his temper contrasts strongly with the impetuosity of mine, which I cannot conceal. He has a great deal of feeling, and is fully sensible of the treasure he possesses in Charlotte. He is free from ill-humour, which you know is the fault I detest most.

He regards me as a man of sense; and my attachment to Charlotte, and the interest I take in all that concerns her, augment his triumph and his love. I shall not inquire whether he may not at times tease her with some little jealousies; as I know that, were I in his place, I should not be entirely free from such sensations.

But, be that as it may, my pleasure with Charlotte is over. Call it folly or infatuation, what signifies a name? The thing speaks for itself. Before Albert came, I knew all that I know now. I knew I could make no pretensions to her, nor did I offer any,—that is, as far as it was possible, in the presence of so much loveliness, not to pant for its enjoyment. And now behold me, like a silly fellow, staring with astonishment when another comes in, and deprives me of my love.

I bite my lips, and feel infinite scorn for those who tell me to be resigned, because there is no help for it. Let me escape from the yoke of such silly subterfuges! I ramble through the woods; and when I return to Charlotte, and find Albert sitting by her side in the summer-house in the garden, I am unable to bear it, behave like a fool, and commit a thousand extravagances. "For Heaven's sake,"

said Charlotte to-day, "let us have no more scenes like those of last night! You terrify me when you are so violent." Between ourselves, I am always away now when he visits her; and I feel delighted when I find her alone.

AUG. 8.

Believe me, dear Wilhelm, I did not allude to you when I spoke so severely of those who advise resignation to inevitable fate. I did not think it possible for you to indulge such a sentiment. But in fact you are right. I only suggest one objection. In this world one is seldom reduced to make a selection between two alternatives. There are as many varieties of conduct and opinion as there are turns of feature between an aquiline nose and a flat one.

You will, therefore, permit me to concede your entire argument, and yet contrive means to escape your dilemma.

Your position is this, I hear you say: "Either you have hopes of obtaining Charlotte, or you have none. Well, in the first case, pursue your course, and press on to the fulfilment of your wishes. In the second, be a man, and shake off a miserable passion, which will enervate and destroy you." My dear friend, this is well and easily said.

But would you require a wretched being, whose life is slowly wasting under a lingering disease, to despatch himself at once by the stroke of a dagger? Does not the very disorder which consumes his strength deprive him of the courage to effect his deliverance?

You may answer me, if you please, with a similar analogy: "Who would not prefer the amputation of an arm to the perilling of life by doubt and procrastination?" But I know not if I am right, and let us leave these comparisons.

Enough! There are moments, Wilhelm, when I could rise up and shake it all off, and when, if I only knew where to go, I could fly from this place.

THE SAME EVENING.

My diary, which I have for some time neglected, came before me to-day; and I am amazed to see how deliberately I have entangled myself step by step. To have seen my position so clearly, and yet to have acted so like a child!

Even still I behold the result plainly, and yet have no thought of acting with greater prudence.

AUG. 10.

If I were not a fool, I could spend the happiest and most delightful life here. So many agreeable circumstances, and of a kind to insure a worthy man's happiness, are seldom united. Alas! I feel it too sensibly,—the heart alone makes our happiness! To be admitted into this most charming family, to be loved by the father as a son, by the children as a father, and by Charlotte!—then the noble Albert, who never disturbs my happiness by any appearance of ill-humour, receiving me with the heartiest affection, and loving me, next to Charlotte, better than all the world! Wilhelm, you would be delighted to hear us in our rambles, and conversations about Charlotte. Nothing in the world can be more absurd than our connection, and yet the thought of it often moves me to tears.

He tells me sometimes of her excellent mother; how, upon her death-bed, she had committed her house and children to Charlotte, and had given Charlotte herself in charge to him; how, since that time, a new spirit had taken possession of her; how, in care and anxiety for their welfare, she became a real mother to them; how every moment of her time was devoted to some labour of love in their behalf, —and yet her mirth and cheerfulness had never forsaken her. I walk by his side, pluck flowers by the way, arrange them carefully into a nosegay, then fling them into the first stream I pass, and watch them as they float gently away. I forgot whether I told you that Albert is to remain here. He has received a government appointment, with a very good salary; and I understand he is in high favour at court. I have met few persons so punctual and methodical in business.

AUG. 12.

Certainly Albert is the best fellow in the world. I had a strange scene with him yesterday. I went to take leave of him; for I took it into my head to spend a few days in these mountains, from where I now write to you. As I

was walking up and down his room, my eye fell upon his pistols. "Lend me those pistols," said I, "for my journey." "By all means," he replied, "if you will take the trouble to load them; for they only hang there for form." I took down one of them; and he continued: "Ever since I was near suffering from my extreme caution, I will have nothing to do with such things." I was curious to hear the story. "I was staying," said he, "some three months ago, at a friend's house in the country. I had a brace of pistols with me, unloaded; and I slept without any anxiety. One rainy afternoon I was sitting by myself, doing nothing, when it occurred to me—I do not know how—that the house might be attacked, that we might require the pistols, that we might —in short, you know how we go on fancying, when we have nothing better to do. I gave the pistols to the servant, to clean and load. He was playing with the maid, and trying to frighten her, when the pistol went off—God knows how!—the ramrod was in the barrel; and it went straight through her right hand, and shattered the thumb. I had to endure all the lamentation, and to pay the surgeon's bill; so, since that time, I have kept all my weapons unloaded. But, my dear friend, what is the use of prudence? We can never be on our guard against all possible dangers. However,"—now, you must know I can tolerate all men till they come to "however;" for it is self-evident that every universal rule must have its exceptions. But he is so exceedingly accurate that if he only fancies he has said a word too precipitate or too general or only half true, he never ceases to qualify, to modify, and extenuate, till at last he appears to have said nothing at all. Upon this occasion Albert was deeply immersed in his subject: I ceased to listen to him, and became lost in reverie. With a sudden motion I pointed the mouth of the pistol to my forehead, over the right eye. "What do you mean?" cried Albert, turning back the pistol. "It is not loaded," said I. "And even if not," he answered with impatience, "what can you mean? I cannot comprehend how a man can be so mad as to shoot himself; and the bare idea of it shocks me."

"But why should any one," said I, "in speaking of an action, venture to pronounce it mad or wise, or good or bad?

What is the meaning of all this? Have you carefully studied the secret motives of our actions? Do you understand—can you explain the causes which occasion them, and make them inevitable? If you can, you will be less hasty with your decision."

"But you will allow," said Albert, "that some actions are criminal, let them spring from whatever motives they may." I granted it, and shrugged my shoulders.

"But still, my good friend," I continued, "there are some exceptions here too. Theft is a crime; but the man who commits it from extreme poverty, with no design but to save his family from perishing, is he an object of pity or of punishment? Who shall throw the first stone at a husband who in the heat of just resentment sacrifices his faithless wife and her perfidious seducer; or at the young maiden who in her weak hour of rapture forgets herself in the impetuous joys of love? Even our laws, cold and cruel as they are, relent in such cases, and withhold their punishment."

"That is quite another thing," said Albert; "because a man under the influence of violent passion loses all power of reflection, and is regarded as intoxicated or insane."

"Oh, you people of sound understandings," I replied, smiling, "are ever ready to exclaim, 'Extravagance, and madness, and intoxication!' You moral men are so calm and so subdued! You abhor the drunken man, and detest the extravagant; you pass by, like the Levite, and thank God, like the Pharisee, that you are not like one of them. I have been more than once intoxicated, my passions have always bordered on extravagance: I am not ashamed to confess it; for I have learned, by my own experience, that all extraordinary men, who have accomplished great and astonishing actions, have ever been decried by the world as drunken or insane. And in private life, too, is it not intolerable that no one can undertake the execution of a noble or generous deed, without giving rise to the exclamation that the doer is intoxicated or mad? Shame upon you, ye sages!"

"This is another of your extravagant humours," said Albert: "you always exaggerate a case, and in this matter

you are undoubtedly wrong; for we were speaking of suicide, which you compare with great actions, when it is impossible to regard it as anything but a weakness. It is much easier to die than to bear a life of misery with fortitude."

I was on the point of breaking off the conversation, for nothing puts me so completely out of patience as the utterance of a wretched commonplace when I am talking from my inmost heart. However, I composed myself, for I had often heard the same observation with sufficient vexation; and I answered him, therefore, with a little warmth, "You call this a weakness,—beware of being led astray by appearances.

"When a nation which has long groaned under the intolerable yoke of a tyrant rises at last and throws off its chains, do you call that weakness? The man who, to rescue his house from the flames, finds his physical strength redoubled, so that he lifts burdens with ease which in the absence of excitement he could scarcely move; he who under the rage of an insult attacks and puts to flight half a score of his enemies,—are such persons to be called weak? My good friend, if resistance be strength, how can the highest degree of resistance be a weakness?"

Albert looked steadfastly at me, and said, "Pray forgive me, but I do not see that the examples you have adduced bear any relation to the question." "Very likely," I answered; "for I have often been told that my style of illustration borders a little on the absurd. But let us see if we cannot place the matter in another point of view, by inquiring what can be a man's state of mind who resolves to free himself from the burden of life,—a burden often so pleasant to bear,—for we cannot otherwise reason fairly upon the subject.

"Human nature," I continued, "has its limits. It is able to endure a certain degree of joy, sorrow, and pain, but becomes annihilated as soon as this measure is exceeded. The question, therefore, is, not whether a man is strong or weak, but whether he is able to endure the measure of his sufferings. The suffering may be moral or physical; and in my opinion it is just as absurd to call a man a

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coward who destroys himself, as to call a man a coward who dies of a malignant fever."

"Paradox, all paradox!" exclaimed Albert. "Not so paradoxical as you imagine," I replied. "You allow that we designate a disease as mortal when Nature is so severely attacked, and her strength so far exhausted, that she cannot possibly recover her former condition under any change that may take place.

"Now, my good friend, apply this to the mind; observe a man in his natural, isolated condition; consider how ideas work, and how impressions fasten on him, till at length a violent passion seizes him, destroying all his powers of calm reflection, and utterly ruining him.

"It is in vain that a man of sound mind and cool temper understands the condition of such a wretched being, in vain he counsels him. He can no more communicate his own wisdom to him than a healthy man can instil his strength into the invalid by whose bedside he is seated."

Albert thought this too general. I reminded him of a girl who had drowned herself a short time previously, and I related her history.

She was a good creature, who had grown up in the narrow sphere of household industry and weekly-appointed labour; one who knew no pleasure beyond indulging in a walk on Sundays, arrayed in her best attire, accompanied by her friends, or perhaps joining in the dance now and then at some festival, and chatting away her spare hours with a neighbour, discussing the scandal or the quarrels of the village,—trifles sufficient to occupy her heart. At length the warmth of her nature is influenced by certain new and unknown wishes. Inflamed by the flatteries of men, her former pleasures become by degrees insipid, till at length she meets with a youth to whom she is atracted by an indescribable feeling; upon him she now rests all her hopes; she forgets the world around her; she sees, hears, desires nothing but him, and him only. He alone occupies all her thoughts. Uncorrupted by the idle indulgence of an enervating vanity, her affection moving steadily towards its object, she hopes to become his, and to realise, in an everlasting union with him, all that happiness which she sought,

all that bliss for which she longed. His repeated promises confirm her hopes: embraces and endearments, which increase the ardour of her desires, overmaster her soul. She floats in a dim, delusive anticipation of her happiness; and her feelings become excited to their utmost tension. She stretches out her arms finally to embrace the object of all her wishes—and her lover forsakes her. Stunned and bewildered, she stands upon a precipice. All is darkness around her.

No prospect, no hope, no consolation,—forsaken by him in whom her existence was centred! She sees nothing of the wide world before her, thinks nothing of the many individuals who might supply the void in her heart; she feels herself deserted, forsaken by the world; and, blinded and impelled by the agony which wrings her soul, she plunges into the deep, to end her sufferings in the broad embrace of death. See here, Albert, the history of thousands; and tell me, is not this a case of physical infirmity? Nature has no way to escape from the labyrinth: her powers are exhausted; she can contend no longer, and the poor soul must die.

"Shame upon him who can look on calmly, and exclaim, 'The foolish girl! she should have waited; she should have allowed time to wear off the impression; her despair would have been softened, and she would have found another lover to comfort her.' One might as well say, 'The fool, to die of a fever! why did he not wait till his strength was restored, till his blood became calm? All would then have gone well, and he would have been alive now.'"

Albert, who could not see the justice of the comparison, offered some further objections, and, amongst others, urged that I had taken the case of a mere ignorant girl. But how any man of sense, of more enlarged views and experience, could be excused, he was unable to comprehend. "My friend!" I exclaimed, "man is but man; and, whatever be the extent of his reasoning powers, they are of little avail when passion rages within, and he feels himself confined by the narrow limits of Nature. It were better, then—But we will talk of this some other time," I said, and caught up my hat. Alas! my heart was full; and we parted with-

out conviction on either side. How rarely in this world do men understand each other!

AUG. 15.

There can be no doubt that in this world nothing is so indispensable as love. I observe that Charlotte could not lose me without a pang, and the very children have but one wish; that is, that I should visit them again to-morrow. I went this afternoon to tune Charlotte's piano. But I could not do it, for the little ones insisted on my telling them a story; and Charlotte herself urged me to satisfy them. I waited upon them at tea, and they are now as fully contented with me as with Charlotte; and I told them my very best tale of the princess who was waited upon by dwarfs. I improve myself by this exercise, and am quite surprised at the impression my stories create. If I sometimes invent an incident which I forget upon the next narration, they remind me directly that the story was different before; so that I now endeavour to relate with exactness the same anecdote in the same monotonous tone which never changes. I find by this, how much an author injures his works by altering them, even though they be improved in a poetical point of view. The first impression is readily received. We are so constituted that we believe the most incredible things; and, once they are engraved upon the memory, woe to him who would endeavour to efface them.

AUG. 18.

Must it ever be thus,—that the source of our happiness must also be the fountain of our misery? The full and ardent sentiment which animated my heart with the love of Nature, overwhelming me with a torrent of delight, and which brought all paradise before me, has now become an insupportable torment,—a demon which perpetually pursues and harasses me. When in by-gone days I gazed from these rocks upon yonder mountains across the river, and upon the green, flowery valley before me, and saw all Nature budding and bursting around; the hills clothed from foot to peak with tall, thick forest trees; the valleys in all their varied windings, shaded with the loveliest woods; and

the soft river gliding along amongst the lisping reeds, mirroring the beautiful clouds which the soft evening breeze wafted across the sky,—when I heard the groves about me melodious with the music of birds, and saw the million swarms of insects dancing in the last golden beams of the sun, whose setting rays awoke the humming beetles from their grassy beds, whilst the subdued tumult around directed my attention to the ground, and I there observed the arid rock compelled to yield nutriment to the dry moss, whilst the heath flourished upon the barren sands below me,—all this displayed to me the inner warmth which animates all nature, and filled and glowed within my heart. I felt myself exalted by this overflowing fulness to the perception of the Godhead, and the glorious forms of an infinite universe became visible to my soul! Stupendous mountains encompassed me, abysses yawned at my feet, and cataracts fell headlong down before me; impetuous rivers rolled through the plain, and rocks and mountains resounded from afar. In the depths of the earth I saw innumerable powers in motion, and multiplying to infinity; whilst upon its surface, and beneath the heavens, there teemed ten thousand varieties of living creatures. Everything around is alive with an infinite number of forms; while mankind fly for security to their petty houses, from the shelter of which they rule in their imaginations over the wide-extended universe. Poor fool! in whose petty estimation all things are little. From the inaccessible mountains, across the desert which no mortal foot has trod, far as the confines of the unknown ocean, breathes the spirit of the eternal Creator; and every atom to which he has given existence finds favour in his sight. Ah, how often at that time has the flight of a bird, soaring above my head, inspired me with the desire of being transported to the shores of the immeasurable waters, there to quaff the pleasures of life from the foaming goblet of the Infinite, and to partake, if but for a moment even, with the confined powers of my soul, the beatitude of that Creator who accomplishes all things in himself, and through himself!

My dear friend, the bare recollection of those hours still consoles me. Even this effort to recall those ineffable sen-

sations, and give them utterance, exalts my soul above itself, and makes me doubly feel the intensity of my present anguish.

It is as if a curtain had been drawn from before my eyes, and, instead of prospects of eternal life, the abyss of an ever-open grave yawned before me. Can we say of anything that it exists when all passes away,—when time, with the speed of a storm, carries all things onward,—and our transitory existence, hurried along by the torrent, is either swallowed up by the waves or dashed against the rocks? There is not a moment but preys upon you, and upon all around you,—not a moment in which you do not yourself become a destroyer. The most innocent walk deprives of life thousands of poor insects: one step destroys the fabric of the industrious ant, and converts a little world into chaos. No: it is not the great and rare calamities of the world, the floods which sweep away whole villages, the earthquakes which swallow up our towns, that affect me. My heart is wasted by the thought of that destructive power which lies concealed in every part of universal Nature. Nature has formed nothing that does not consume itself, and every object near it: so that, surrounded by earth and air and all the active powers, I wander on my way with aching heart; and the universe is to me a fearful monster, forever devouring its own offspring.

AUG. 21.

In vain do I stretch out my arms towards her when I awaken in the morning from my weary slumbers. In vain do I seek for her at night in my bed, when some innocent dream has happily deceived me, and placed her near me in the fields, when I have seized her hand and covered it with countless kisses. And when I feel for her in the half confusion of sleep, with the happy sense that she is near me, tears flow from my oppressed heart; and, bereft of all comfort, I weep over my future woes.

AUG. 22.

What a misfortune, Wilhelm! My active spirits have degenerated into contented indolence. I cannot be idle,

and yet I am unable to set to work. I cannot think: I have books are distasteful to me. Once we give ourselves up, we are totally lost. Many a time and oft I wish I were a common labourer; that awakening in the morning, I might have but one prospect, one pursuit, one hope, for the day which has dawned. I often envy Albert when I see him buried in a heap of papers and parchments, and I fancy I should be happy were I in his place. Often impressed with this feeling, I have been on the point of writing to you and to the minister, for the appointment at the embassy, which you think I might obtain. I believe I might procure it. The minister has long shown a regard for me, and has frequently urged me to seek employment. It is the business of an hour only.

Now and then the fable of the horse recurs to me. Weary of liberty, he suffered himself to be saddled and bridled, and was ridden to death for his pains. I know not what to determine upon. For is not this anxiety for change the consequence of that restless spirit which would pursue me equally in every situation of life?

AUG. 28.

If my ills would admit of any cure, they would certainly be cured here. This is my birthday, and early in the morning I received a packet from Albert. Upon opening it, I found one of the pink ribbons which Charlotte wore in her dress the first time I saw her, and which I had several times asked her to give me. With it were two volumes in duodecimo of Wetstein's Homer,—a book I had often wished for, to save me the inconvenience of carrying the large Ernestine edition with me upon my walks. You see how they anticipate my wishes, how well they understand all those little attentions of friendship, so superior to the costly presents of the great, which are humiliating. I kissed the ribbon a thousand times, and in every breath inhaled the remembrance of those happy and irrevocable days, which filled me with the keenest joy. Such, Wilhelm, is our fate. I do not murmur at it: the flowers of life are but visionary. How many pass away and leave no trace behind; how few yield any fruit; and the fruit itself, how rarely does it ripen!

And yet there are flowers enough; and is it not strange my friend, that we should suffer the little that does really ripen to rot, decay, and perish unenjoyed? Farewell! This is a glorious summer. I often climb into the trees in Charlotte's orchard, and shake down the pears that hang on the highest branches; she stands below, and catches them as they fall.

AUG. 30.

Unhappy being that I am! Why do I thus deceive myself? What is to come of all this wild, aimless, endless passion? I cannot pray except to her. My imagination sees nothing but her; all surrounding objects are of no account except as they relate to her. In this dreamy state I enjoy many happy hours, till at length I feel compelled to tear myself away from her. Ah, Wilhelm, to what does not my heart often compel me! When I have spent several hours in her company, till I feel completely absorbed by her figure, her grace, the divine expression of her thoughts, my mind becomes gradually excited to the highest excess, my sight grows dim, my hearing confused, my breathing oppressed as if by the hand of a murderer, and my beating heart seeks to obtain relief for my aching senses. I am sometimes unconscious whether I really exist. If in such moments I find no sympathy, and Charlotte does not allow me to enjoy the melancholy consolation of bathing her hand with my tears, I feel compelled to tear myself from her, when I either wander through the country, climb some precipitous cliff, or force a path through the trackless thicket, where I am lacerated and torn by thorns and briers; and thence I find relief.

Sometimes I lie stretched on the ground, overcome with fatigue and dying with thirst; sometimes, late in the night, when the moon shines above me, I recline against an aged tree in some sequestered forest to rest my weary limbs, when, exhausted and worn, I sleep till break of day. O Wilhelm! the hermit's cell, his sackcloth, and girdle of thorns would be luxury and indulgence compared with what I suffer. Adieu! I see no end to this wretchedness except the grave.

SEPT. 3.

I must away. Thank you, Wilhelm, for determining my wavering purpose. For a whole fortnight I have thought of leaving her. I must away. She has returned to town, and is at the house of a friend. And then, Albert—yes, I must go.

SEPT. 10.

Oh, what a night, Wilhelm! I can henceforth bear anything. I shall never see her again. Oh, why cannot I fall on your neck, and with floods of tears and raptures give utterance to all the passions which distract my heart! Here I sit gasping for breath, and struggling to compose myself. I wait for day, and at sunrise the horses are to be at the door.

And she is sleeping calmly, little suspecting that she has seen me for the last time. I am free. I have had the courage, in an interview of two hours' duration, not to betray my intention. And oh, Wilhelm, what a conversation it was!

Albert had promised to come to Charlotte in the garden immediately after supper. I was upon the terrace under the tall chestnut-trees, and watched the setting sun. I saw him sink for the last time beneath this delightful valley and silent stream. I had often visited the same spot with Charlotte, and witnessed that glorious sight; and now—I was walking up and down the very avenue which was so dear to me. A secret sympathy had frequently drawn me thither before I knew Charlotte; and we were delighted when, in our early acquaintance, we discovered that we each loved the same spot, which is indeed as romantic as any that ever captivated the fancy of an artist.

From beneath the chestnut-trees there is an extensive view. But I remember that I have mentioned all this in a former letter, and have described the tall mass of beech-trees at the end, and how the avenue grows darker and darker as it winds its way among them, till it ends in a gloomy recess, which has all the charm of a mysterious solitude. I still remember the strange feeling of melancholy which came over me the first time I entered that

And yet there are flowers enough; and is it not strange my friend, that we should suffer the little that does really ripen to rot, decay, and perish unenjoyed? Farewell! This is a glorious summer. I often climb into the trees in Charlotte's orchard, and shake down the pears that hang on the highest branches; she stands below, and catches them as they fall.

AUG. 30.

Unhappy being that I am! Why do I thus deceive myself? What is to come of all this wild, aimless, endless passion? I cannot pray except to her. My imagination sees nothing but her; all surrounding objects are of no account except as they relate to her. In this dreamy state I enjoy many happy hours, till at length I feel compelled to tear myself away from her. Ah, Wilhelm, to what does not my heart often compel me! When I have spent several hours in her company, till I feel completely absorbed by her figure, her grace, the divine expression of her thoughts, my mind becomes gradually excited to the highest excess, my sight grows dim, my hearing confused, my breathing oppressed as if by the hand of a murderer, and my beating heart seeks to obtain relief for my aching senses. I am sometimes unconscious whether I really exist. If in such moments I find no sympathy, and Charlotte does not allow me to enjoy the melancholy consolation of bathing her hand with my tears, I feel compelled to tear myself from her, when I either wander through the country, climb some precipitous cliff, or force a path through the trackless thicket, where I am lacerated and torn by thorns and briers; and thence I find relief.

Sometimes I lie stretched on the ground, overcome with fatigue and dying with thirst; sometimes, late in the night, when the moon shines above me, I recline against an aged tree in some sequestered forest to rest my weary limbs, when, exhausted and worn, I sleep till break of day. O Wilhelm! the hermit's cell, his sackcloth, and girdle of thorns would be luxury and indulgence compared with what I suffer. Adieu! I see no end to this wretchedness except the grave.

SEPT. 3.

I must away. Thank you, Wilhelm, for determining my wavering purpose. For a whole fortnight I have thought of leaving her. I must away. She has returned to town, and is at the house of a friend. And then, Albert—yes, I must go.

SEPT. 10.

Oh, what a night, Wilhelm! I can henceforth bear anything. I shall never see her again. Oh, why cannot I fall on your neck, and with floods of tears and raptures give utterance to all the passions which distract my heart! Here I sit gasping for breath, and struggling to compose myself. I wait for day, and at sunrise the horses are to be at the door.

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dark retreat, at bright midday. I felt some secret foreboding that it would one day be to me the scene of some happiness or misery.

I had spent half an hour struggling between the contending thoughts of going and returning, when I heard them coming up the terrace. I ran to meet them. I trembled as I took her hand, and kissed it. As we reached the top of the terrace, the moon rose from behind the wooded hill. We conversed on many subjects, and without perceiving it approached the gloomy recess. Charlotte entered, and sat down. Albert seated himself beside her. I did the same, but my agitation did not suffer me to remain long seated. I got up and stood before her, then walked backwards and forwards, and sat down again. I was restless and miserable. Charlotte drew our attention to the beautiful effect of the moonlight, which threw a silver hue over the terrace in front of us beyond the beech-trees. It was a glorious sight, and was rendered more striking by the darkness which surrounded the spot where we were. We remained for some time silent, when Charlotte observed, "Whenever I walk by moonlight, it brings to my remembrance all my beloved and departed friends, and I am filled with thoughts of death and futurity. We shall live again Werther," she continued, with a firm but feeling voice; "but shall we know one another again? What do you think? What do you say?"

"Charlotte," I said, as I took her hand in mine, and my eyes filled with tears, "we shall see each other again,—here and hereafter we shall meet again." I could say no more. Why, Wilhelm, should she put this question to me just at the moment when the fear of our cruel separation filled my heart?

"And oh, do those departed ones know how we are employed here? Do they know when we are well and happy? Do they know when we recall their memories with the fondest love? In the silent hour of evening the shade of my mother hovers round me; when seated in the midst of my children, I see them assembled near me as they used to assemble near her; and then I raise my anxious eyes to heaven, and wish she could look down upon us, and wit-

ness how I fulfil the promise I made to her in her last moments to be a mother to her children. With what emotion do I then exclaim: 'Pardon, dearest of mothers, pardon me, if I do not adequately supply your place! Alas! I do my utmost. They are clothed and fed; and, still better, they are loved and educated. Could you but see, sweet saint, the peace and harmony that dwells amongst us, you would glorify God with the warmest feelings of gratitude, to whom, in your last hour, you addressed such fervent prayers for our happiness.'" Thus did she express herself; but, oh, Wilhelm, who can do justice to her language? How can cold and passionless words convey the heavenly expressions of the spirit? Albert interrupted her gently: "This affects you too deeply, my dear Charlotte. I know your soul dwells on such recollections with intense delight; but I implore—" "Oh, Albert!" she continued, "I am sure you do not forget the evenings when we three used to sit at the little round table, when papa was absent, and the little ones had retired. You often had a good book with you, but seldom read it; the conversation of that noble being was preferable to everything,—that beautiful, bright, gentle, and yet ever-toiling woman. God alone knows how I have supplicated with tears on my nightly couch that I might be like her!"

I threw myself at her feet, and seizing her hand, bedewed it with a thousand tears. "Charlotte," I exclaimed, "God's blessing and your mother's spirit are upon you!" "Oh that you had known her!" she said, with a warm pressure of the hand. "She was worthy of being known to you." I thought I should have fainted. Never had I received praise so flattering. She continued: "And yet she was doomed to die in the flower of her youth, when her youngest child was scarcely six months old. Her illness was but short, but she was calm and resigned; and it was only for her children, especially the youngest, that she felt unhappy. When her end drew nigh, she bade me bring them to her. I obeyed. The younger ones knew nothing of their approaching loss, while the elder ones were quite overcome with grief. They stood around the bed; and she raised her feeble hands to heaven, and prayed over them; then kissing them in turn,

she dismissed them, and said to me, 'Be you a mother to them.' I gave her my hand. 'You are promising much, my child,' she said,—'a mother's fondness and a mother's care! I have often witnessed, by your tears of gratitude, that you know what is a mother's tenderness; show it to your brothers and sisters. And be dutiful and faithful to your father as a wife: you will be his comfort.' She inquired for him. He had retired to conceal his intolerable anguish,—he was heart-broken.

"Albert, you were in the room. She heard some one moving; she inquired who it was, and desired you to approach. She surveyed us both with a look of composure and satisfaction, expressive of her conviction that we should be happy,—happy with one another." Albert fell upon her neck, and kissed her, and exclaimed, "We are so, and we shall be so!" Even Albert, generally so tranquil, had quite lost his composure; and I was excited beyond expression.

"And such a being," she continued, "was to leave us, Werther! Great God, must we thus part with everything we hold dear in this world? Nobody felt this more acutely than the children; they cried and lamented for a long time afterwards, complaining that black men had carried away their dear mamma."

Charlotte rose. It aroused me; but I continued sitting, and held her hand. "Let us go," she said; "it grows late." She attempted to withdraw her hand; I held it still. "We shall see each other again," I exclaimed; "we shall recognise each other under every possible change! I am going," I continued, "going willingly; but, should I say forever, perhaps I may not keep my word. Adieu, Charlotte; adieu, Albert. We shall meet again." "Yes; to-morrow, I think," she answered with a smile. To-morrow! how I felt the word! Ah! she little thought, when she drew her hand away from mine. They walked down the avenue. I stood gazing after them in the moonlight. I threw myself upon the ground, and wept; I then sprang up, and ran out upon the terrace, and saw, under the shade of the linden-trees, her white dress disappearing near the garden-gate. I stretched out my arms, and she vanished.

BOOK II

OCT. 20.

WE arrived here yesterday. The ambassador is indisposed, and will not go out for some days. If he were less peevish and morose, all would be well. I see but too plainly that Heaven has destined me to severe trials; but courage! a light heart may bear anything. A light heart! I smile to find such a word proceeding from my pen. A little more light-heartedness would render me the happiest being under the sun. But must I despair of my talents and faculties, whilst others of far inferior abilities parade before me with the utmost self-satisfaction? Gracious Providence, to whom I owe all my powers, why didst thou not withhold some of those blessings I possess, and substitute in their place a feeling of self-confidence and contentment?

But patience! all will yet be well; for I assure you, my dear friend, you were right: since I have been obliged to associate continually with other people, and observe what they do, and how they employ themselves, I have become far better satisfied with myself. For we are so constituted by nature, that we are ever prone to compare ourselves with others; and our happiness or misery depends very much on the objects and persons around us. On this account nothing is more dangerous than solitude; there our imagination, always disposed to rise, taking a new flight on the wings of fancy, pictures to us a chain of beings of whom we seem the most inferior. All things appear greater than they really are, and all seem superior to us. This operation of the mind is quite natural; we so continually feel our own imperfections, and fancy we perceive in others the qualities we do not possess, attributing to them also all that we enjoy ourselves, that by this process we form the idea of a perfect, happy man,—a man, however, who only exists in our own imagination.

But when, in spite of weakness and disappointments, we set to work in earnest, and persevere steadily, we often find that, though obliged continually to tack, we make more way than others who have the assistance of wind and tide; and, in truth, there can be no greater satisfaction than to keep pace with others or outstrip them in the race.

Nov. 26.

I begin to find my situation here more tolerable, considering all circumstances. I find a great advantage in being much occupied; and the number of persons I meet, and their different pursuits, create a varied entertainment for me. I have formed the acquaintance of the Count C——, and I esteem him more and more every day. He is a man of strong understanding and great discernment; but though he sees farther than other people, he is not on that account cold in his manner, but capable of inspiring and returning the warmest affection. He appeared interested in me on one occasion, when I had to transact some business with him. He perceived, at the first word, that we understood each other, and that he could converse with me in a different tone from what he used with others. I cannot sufficiently esteem his frank and open kindness to me. It is the greatest and most genuine of pleasures to observe a great mind in sympathy with our own.

Dec. 24.

As I anticipated, the ambassador occasions me infinite annoyance. He is the most punctilious blockhead under heaven. He does everything step by step, with the trifling minuteness of an old woman; and he is a man whom it is impossible to please, because he is never pleased with himself. I like to do business regularly and cheerfully, and, when it is finished, to leave it. But he constantly returns my papers to me, saying, "They will do," but recommending me to look over them again, as "one may always improve by using a better word or a more appropriate particle." I then lose all patience, and wish myself at the Devil's. Not a conjunction, not an adverb, must be omitted; he has a deadly antipathy to all those transposi-

tions of which I am so fond; and if the music of our periods is not tuned to the established official key, he cannot comprehend our meaning. It is deplorable to be connected with such a fellow.

My acquaintance with the Count C—— is the only compensation for such an evil. He told me frankly, the other day, that he was much displeased with the difficulties and delays of the ambassador; that people like him are obstacles, both to themselves and to others. "But," added he, "one must submit, like a traveller who has to ascend a mountain; if the mountain was not there, the road would be both shorter and pleasanter; but there it is, and he must get over it.

The old man perceives the count's partiality for me; this annoys him, and he seizes every opportunity to depreciate the count in my hearing. I naturally defend him, and that only makes matters worse. Yesterday he made me indignant, for he also alluded to me. "The count," he said, "is a man of the world, and a good man of business; his style is good, and he writes with facility; but, like other geniuses, he has no solid learning." He looked at me with an expression that seemed to ask if I felt the blow. But it did not produce the desired effect; I despise a man who can think and act in such a manner. However, I made a stand, and answered with not a little warmth. The count, I said, was a man entitled to respect, alike for his character and his acquirements. I had never met a person whose mind was stored with more useful and extensive knowledge,—who had, in fact, mastered such an infinite variety of subjects, and who yet retained all his activity for the details of ordinary business. This was altogether beyond his comprehension; and I took my leave, lest my anger should be too highly excited by some new absurdity of his.

And you are to blame for all this,—you who persuaded me to bend my neck to this yoke by preaching a life of activity to me. If the man who plants vegetables, and carries his corn to town on market-days, is not more usefully employed than I am, then let me work ten years longer at the galleys to which I am now chained.

Oh the brilliant wretchedness, the weariness, that one is doomed to witness among the silly people whom we meet in society here! The ambition of rank! How they watch, how they toil, to gain precedence! What poor and contemptible passions are displayed in their utter nakedness! We have a woman here, for example, who never ceases to entertain the company with accounts of her family and her estates. Any stranger would consider her a silly being, whose head was turned by her pretensions to rank and property; but she is in reality even more ridiculous,—the daughter of a mere magistrate's clerk from this neighbourhood. I cannot understand how human beings can so debase themselves.

Every day I observe more and more the folly of judging of others by ourselves; and I have so much trouble with myself, and my own heart is in such constant agitation, that I am well content to let others pursue their own course, if they only allow me the same privilege.

What provokes me most is the unhappy extent to which distinctions of rank are carried. I know perfectly well how necessary are inequalities of condition, and I am sensible of the advantages I myself derive therefrom; but I would not have these institutions prove a barrier to the small chance of happiness which I may enjoy on this earth.

I have lately become acquainted with a Miss B——, a very agreeable girl, who has retained her natural manners in the midst of artificial life. Our first conversation pleased us both equally; and, at taking leave, I requested permission to visit her. She consented in so obliging a manner, that I waited with impatience for the arrival of the happy moment. She is not a native of this place, but resides here with her aunt. The countenance of the old daly is not prepossessing. I paid her much attention, addressing the greater part of my conversation to her; and, in less than half an hour, I discovered what her niece subsequently acknowledged to me, that her aged aunt, having but a small fortune and a still smaller share of understanding, enjoys no satisfaction except in the pedigree of her ancestors, no protection save in her noble birth, and no enjoyment but in looking from her castle over the heads of the humble citizens.

She was, no doubt, handsome in her youth, and in her early years probably trifled away her time in rendering many a poor youth the sport of her caprice: in her riper years she has submitted to the yoke of a veteran officer, who, in return for her person and her small independence, has spent with her what we may designate her age of brass. He is dead; and she is now a widow, and deserted. She spends her iron age alone, and would not be approached, except for the loveliness of her niece.

JAN. 8. 1772.

What beings are men, whose whole thoughts are occupied with form and ceremony, who for years together devote their mental and physical exertions to the task of advancing themselves but one step, and endeavouring to occupy a higher place at the table! Not that such persons would otherwise want employment: on the contrary, they give themselves much trouble by neglecting important business for such petty trifles. Last week a question of precedence arose at a sledging-party, and all our amusement was spoiled.

The silly creatures cannot see that it is not place which constitutes real greatness, since the man who occupies the first place but seldom plays the principal part. How many kings are governed by their ministers, how many ministers by their secretaries? Who, in such cases, is really the chief? He, as it seems to me, who can see through the others, and possesses strength or skill enough to make their power or passions subservient to the execution of his own designs.

JAN. 20.

I must write to you from this place, my dear Charlotte, from a small room in a country inn, where I have taken shelter from a severe storm. During my whole residence in that wretched place, D——, where I lived amongst strangers,—strangers, indeed, to this heart,—I never at any time felt the smallest inclination to correspond with you; but in this cottage, in this retirement, in this solitude, with the snow and hail beating against my lattice-pane, you are my first thought. The instant I entered, your figure rose up before me, and the remembrance,—O my Charlotte, the

sacred, tender remembrance! Gracious Heaven, restore to me the happy moment of our first acquaintance!

Could you but see me, my dear Charlotte, in the whirl of dissipation,—how my senses are fried up, but my heart is at no time full. I enjoy no single moment of happiness: all is vain,—nothing touches me. I stand, as it were, before the raree-show: I see the little puppets move, and I ask whether it is not an optical illusion. I am amused with these puppets, or rather, I am myself one of them: but when I sometimes grasp my neighbour's hand, I feel that it is not natural, and I withdraw mine with a shudder. In the evening I say I will enjoy the next morning's sunrise, and yet I remain in bed: in the day I promise to ramble by moonlight: and I, nevertheless, remain at home. I know not why I rise, nor why I go to sleep.

The leaven which animated my existence is gone: the charm which cheered me in the gloom of night, and aroused me from my morning slumbers, is forever fled.

I have found but one being here to interest me, a Miss B——. She resembles you, my dear Charlotte, if any one can possibly resemble you. "Ah!" you will say, "he has learned how to pay fine compliments." And this is partly true. I have been very agreeable lately, as it was not in my power to be otherwise. I have, moreover, a deal of wit: and the ladies say that no one understands flattery better, or falsehoods you will add; since the one accomplishment invariably accompanies the other. But I must tell you of Miss B——. She has abundance of soul, which flashes from her deep blue eyes. Her rank is a torment to her, and satisfies no one desire of her heart. She would gladly retire from this whirl of fashion, and we often picture to ourselves a life of undisturbed happiness in distant scenes of rural retirement: and then we speak of you, my dear Charlotte; for she knows you, and renders homage to your merits; but her homage is not exacted, but voluntary,—she loves you, and delights to hear you made the subject of conversation.

Oh that I were sitting at your feet in your favourite little room, with the dear children playing around us! If they became troublesome to you, I would tell them some appall-

ing goblin story; and they would crowd round me with silent attention. The sun is setting in glory; his last rays are shining on the snow, which covers the face of the country: the storm is over, and I must return to my dungeon. Adieu! Is Albert with you? and what is he to you? God forgive the question.

FEB. 8.

For a week past we have had the most wretched weather: but this to me is a blessing; for, during my residence here, not a single fine day has beamed from the heavens but has been lost to me by the intrusion of somebody. During the severity of rain, sleet, frost, and storm, I congratulate myself that it cannot be worse in-doors than abroad, nor worse abroad than it is within doors; and so I become reconciled. When the sun rises bright in the morning, and promises a glorious day, I never omit to exclaim, "There, now, they have another blessing from Heaven, which they will be sure to destroy: they spoil everything,—health, fame, happiness, amusement; and they do this generally through folly, ignorance, or imbecility, and always, according to their own account, with the best intentions!" I could often beseech them, on my bended knees, to be less resolved upon their own destruction.

FEB. 17.

I fear that my ambassador and I shall not continue much longer together. He is really growing past endurance. He transacts his business in so ridiculous a manner that I am often compelled to contradict him, and do things my own way; and then, of course, he thinks them very ill done. He complained of me lately on this account at court; and the minister gave me a reprimand,—a gentle one it is true, but still a reprimand. In consequence of this I was about to tender my resignation, when I received a letter, to which I submitted with great respect, on account of the high, noble, and generous spirit which dictated it. He endeavoured to soothe my excessive sensibility, paid a tribute to my extreme ideas of duty, of good example, and of perseverance in business, as the fruit of my youthful ardour,—an impulse

which he did not seek to destroy, but only to moderate, that it might have proper play and be productive of good. So now I am at rest for another week, and no longer at variance with myself. Content and peace of mind are valuable things: I could wish, my dear friend, that these precious jewels were less transitory.

FEB. 20.

God bless you, my dear friends, and may he grant you that happiness which he denies to me!

I thank you, Albert, for having deceived me. I waited for the news that your wedding-day was fixed; and I intended on that day, with solemnity, to take down Charlotte's profile from the walls, and to bury it with some other papers I possess. You are now united, and her picture still remains here. Well, let it remain! Why should it not? I know that I am still one of your society, that I still occupy a place uninjured in Charlotte's heart, that I hold the second place therein; and I intend to keep it. Oh, I should become mad if she could forget! Albert, that thought is hell! Farewell, Albert,—farewell, angel of heaven,—farewell, Charlotte!

MARCH 15.

I have just had a sad adventure, which will drive me away from here. I lose all patience! Death! It is not be remedied; and you alone are to blame, for you urged and impelled me to fill a post for which I was by no means suited. I have now reason to be satisfied, and so have you! But, that you may not again attribute this fatality to my impetuous temper, I send you, my dear sir, a plain and simple narration of the affair, as a mere chronicler of facts would describe it.

The Count of O—— likes and distinguishes me. It is well known, and I have mentioned this to you a hundred times. Yesterday I dined with him. It is the day on which the nobility are accustomed to assemble at his house in the evening. I never once thought of the assembly, nor that we subalterns did not belong to such society. Well, I dined with the count; and after dinner we adjourned to the large hall. We walked up and down together; and I conversed with

him, and with Colonel B——, who joined us; and in this manner the hour for the assembly approached. God knows, I was thinkong of nothing, when who should enter but the honourable Lady S——, accompanied by her noble husband and their silly, scheming daughter, with her small waist and flat neck; and, with disdainful looks and a haughty air, they passed me by. As I heartily detest the whole race, I determined upon going away; and only waited till the count had disengaged himself from their impertinent prattle, to take leave, when the agreeable Miss B—— came in. As I never meet her without experiencing a heartfelt pleasure, I stayed and talked to her, leaning over the back of her chair, and did not perceive, till after some time, that she seemed a little confused, and ceased to answer me with her usual ease of manner. I was struck with it. "Heavens!" I said to myself, "can she, too, be like the rest?" I felt annoyed, and was about to withdraw; but I remained, notwithstanding, forming excuses for her conduct fancying she did not mean it, and still hoping to receive some friendly recognition. The rest of the company now arrived. There was the Baron F——, in an entire suit that dated from the coronation of Francis I.; the Chancellor N——, with his deaf wife; the shabbily dressed I——, whose old-fashioned coat bore evidence of modern repairs: this crowned the whole. I conversed with some of my acquaintances, but they answered me laconically. I was engaged in observing Miss B——, and did not notice that the women were whispering at the end of the room, that the murmur extended by degrees to the men, that Madame S—— addressed the count with much warmth (this was all related to me subsequently by Miss B——); till at length the count came up to me, and took me to the window. "You know our ridiculous customs," he said. "I perceive the company is rather displeased at your being here. I would not on any account"—"I beg your excellency's pardon!" I exclaimed. "I ought to have thought of this before, but I know you will forgive this little inattention. I was going," I added, "some time ago, but my evil genius detained me." And I smiled and bowed to take my leave. He shook me by the hand, in a manner which expressed everything. I hastened

at once from the illustrious assembly, sprang into a carriage, and drove to M——. I contemplated the setting sun from the top of the hill, and read that beautiful passage in Homer where Ulysses is entertained by the hospitable herdsmen. This was indeed delightful.

I returned home to supper in the evening. But few persons were assembled in the room. They had turned up a corner of the tablecloth, and were playing at dice. The good-natured A—— came in. He laid down his hat when he saw me, approached me, and said in a low tone, "You have met with a disagreeable adventure." "I!" I exclaimed. "The count obliged you to withdraw from the assembly." "Deuce take the assembly!" said I. "I was very glad to be gone." "I am delighted," he added, "that you take it so lightly. I am only sorry that it is already so much spoken of." The circumstance then began to pain me. I fancied that every one who sat down, and even looked at me, was thinking of this incident; and my heart became embittered.

And now I could plunge a dagger into my bosom when I hear myself everywhere pitied, and observe the triumph of my enemies, who say that this is always the case with vain persons, whose heads are turned with conceit, who affect to despise forms and such petty, idle nonsense.

Say what you will of fortitude, but show me the man who can patiently endure the laughter of fools, when they have obtained an advantage over him. 'Tis only when their nonsense is without foundation that one can suffer it without complaint.

MARCH 16.

Everything conspires against me. I met Miss B—— walking to-day. I could not help joining her; and when we were at a little distance from her companions, I expressed my sense of her altered manner towards me. "O Werther!" she said, in a tone of emotion, "you, who know my heart, how could you so ill interpret my distress? What did I not suffer for you from the moment you entered the room! I foresaw it all; a hundred times was I on the point of mentioning it to you. I knew that the S——s and T——s, with

their husbands, would quit the room rather than remain in your company. I knew that the count would not break with them: and now so much is said about it." "How!" I exclaimed, and endeavoured to conceal my emotion; for all that Adelin had mentioned to me yesterday recurred to me painfully at that moment. "Oh, how much it has already cost me!" said this amiable girl, while her eyes filled with tears. I could scarcely contain myself, and was ready to throw myself at her feet. "Explain yourself!" I cried. Tears flowed down her cheeks. I became quite frantic. She wiped them away, without attempting to conceal them. "You know my aunt," she continued; "she was present: and in what light does she consider the affair! Last night, and this morning, Werther, I was compelled to listen to a lecture upon my acquaintance with you. I have been obliged to hear you condemned and depreciated; and I could not—I dared not—say much in your defence."

Every word she uttered was a dagger to my heart. She did not feel what a mercy it would have been to conceal everything from me. She told me, in addition, all the impertinence that would be further circulated, and how the malicious would triumph; how they would rejoice over the punishment of my pride, over my humiliation for that want of esteem for others with which I had often been reproached. To hear all this, Wilhelm, uttered by her in a voice of the most sincere sympathy, awakened all my passions; and I am still in a state of extreme excitement. I wish I could find a man to jeer me about this event. I would sacrifice him to my resentment. The sight of his blood might possibly be a relief to my fury. A hundred times have I seized a dagger, to give ease to this oppressed heart. Naturalists tell of a noble race of horses that instinctively open a vein with their teeth, when heated and exhausted by a long course, in order to breathe more freely, I am often tempted to open a vein, to procure for myself everlasting liberty.

MARCH 24.

I have tendered my resignation to the court. I hope it will be accepted, and you will forgive me for not having

And yet there are flowers enough; and is it not strange my friend, that we should suffer the little that does really ripen to rot, decay, and perish unenjoyed? Farewell! This is a glorious summer. I often climb into the trees in Charlotte's orchard, and shake down the pears that hang on the highest branches; she stands below, and catches them as they fall.

AUG. 30.

Unhappy being that I am! Why do I thus deceive myself? What is to come of all this wild, aimless, endless passion? I cannot pray except to her. My imagination sees nothing but her; all surrounding objects are of no account except as they relate to her. In this dreamy state I enjoy many happy hours, till at length I feel compelled to tear myself away from her. Ah, Wilhelm, to what does not my heart often compel me! When I have spent several hours in her company, till I feel completely absorbed by her figure, her grace, the divine expression of her thoughts, my mind becomes gradually excited to the highest excess, my sight grows dim, my hearing confused, my breathing oppressed as if by the hand of a murderer, and my beating heart seeks to obtain relief for my aching senses. I am sometimes unconscious whether I really exist. If in such moments I find no sympathy, and Charlotte does not allow me to enjoy the melancholy consolation of bathing her hand with my tears, I feel compelled to tear myself from her, when I either wander through the country, climb some precipitous cliff, or force a path through the trackless thicket, where I am lacerated and torn by thorns and briers; and thence I find relief.

Sometimes I lie stretched on the ground, overcome with fatigue and dying with thirst; sometimes, late in the night, when the moon shines above me, I recline against an aged tree in some sequestered forest to rest my weary limbs, when, exhausted and worn, I sleep till break of day. O Wilhelm! the hermit's cell, his sackcloth, and girdle of thorns would be luxury and indulgence compared with what I suffer. Adieu! I see no end to this wretchedness except the grave.

SEPT. 3.

I must away. Thank you, Wilhelm, for determining my wavering purpose. For a whole fortnight I have thought of leaving her. I must away. She has returned to town, and is at the house of a friend. And then, Albert—yes, I must go.

SEPT. 10.

Oh, what a night, Wilhelm! I can henceforth bear anything. I shall never see her again. Oh, why cannot I fall on your neck, and with floods of tears and raptures give utterance to all the passions which distract my heart! Here I sit gasping for breath, and struggling to compose myself. I wait for day, and at sunrise the horses are to be at the door.

And she is sleeping calmly, little suspecting that she has seen me for the last time. I am free. I have had the courage, in an interview of two hours' duration, not to betray my intention. And oh, Wilhelm, what a conversation it was!

Albert had promised to come to Charlotte in the garden immediately after supper. I was upon the terrace under the tall chestnut-trees, and watched the setting sun. I saw him sink for the last time beneath this delightful valley and silent stream. I had often visited the same spot with Charlotte, and witnessed that glorious sight; and now—I was walking up and down the very avenue which was so dear to me. A secret sympathy had frequently drawn me thither before I knew Charlotte; and we were delighted when, in our early acquaintance, we discovered that we each loved the same spot, which is indeed as romantic as any that ever captivated the fancy of an artist.

From beneath the chestnut-trees there is an extensive view. But I remember that I have mentioned all this in a former letter, and have described the tall mass of beech-trees at the end, and how the avenue grows darker and darker as it winds its way among them, till it ends in a gloomy recess, which has all the charm of a mysterious solitude. I still remember the strange feeling of melancholy which came over me the first time I entered that

dark retreat, at bright midday. I felt some secret foreboding that it would one day be to me the scene of some happiness or misery.

I had spent half an hour struggling between the contending thoughts of going and returning, when I heard them coming up the terrace. I ran to meet them. I trembled as I took her hand, and kissed it. As we reached the top of the terrace, the moon rose from behind the wooded hill. We conversed on many subjects, and without perceiving it approached the gloomy recess. Charlotte entered, and sat down. Albert seated himself beside her. I did the same, but my agitation did not suffer me to remain long seated. I got up and stood before her, then walked backwards and forwards, and sat down again. I was restless and miserable. Charlotte drew our attention to the beautiful effect of the moonlight, which threw a silver hue over the terrace in front of us beyond the beech-trees. It was a glorious sight, and was rendered more striking by the darkness which surrounded the spot where we were. We remained for some time silent, when Charlotte observed, "Whenever I walk by moonlight, it brings to my remembrance all my beloved and departed friends, and I am filled with thoughts of death and futurity. We shall live again Werther," she continued, with a firm but feeling voice; "but shall we know one another again? What do you think? What do you say?"

"Charlotte," I said, as I took her hand in mine, and my eyes filled with tears, "we shall see each other again,—here and hereafter we shall meet again." I could say no more. Why, Wilhelm, should she put this question to me just at the moment when the fear of our cruel separation filled my heart?

"And oh, do those departed ones know how we are employed here? Do they know when we are well and happy? Do they know when we recall their memories with the fondest love? In the silent hour of evening the shade of my mother hovers round me; when seated in the midst of my children, I see them assembled near me as they used to assemble near her; and then I raise my anxious eyes to heaven, and wish she could look down upon us, and wit-

ness how I fulfil the promise I made to her in her last moments to be a mother to her children. With what emotion do I then exclaim: 'Pardon, dearest of mothers, pardon me, if I do not adequately supply your place! Alas! I do my utmost. They are clothed and fed; and, still better, they are loved and educated. Could you but see, sweet saint, the peace and harmony that dwells amongst us, you would glorify God with the warmest feelings of gratitude, to whom, in your last hour, you addressed such fervent prayers for our happiness.'" Thus did she express herself; but, oh, Wilhelm, who can do justice to her language? How can cold and passionless words convey the heavenly expressions of the spirit? Albert interrupted her gently: "This affects you too deeply, my dear Charlotte. I know your soul dwells on such recollections with intense delight; but I implore—" "Oh, Albert!" she continued, "I am sure you do not forget the evenings when we three used to sit at the little round table, when papa was absent, and the little ones had retired. You often had a good book with you, but seldom read it; the conversation of that noble being was preferable to everything,—that beautiful, bright, gentle, and yet ever-toiling woman. God alone knows how I have supplicated with tears on my nightly couch that I might be like her!"

I threw myself at her feet, and seizing her hand, bedewed it with a thousand tears. "Charlotte," I exclaimed, "God's blessing and your mother's spirit are upon you!" "Oh that you had known her!" she said, with a warm pressure of the hand. "She was worthy of being known to you." I thought I should have fainted. Never had I received praise so flattering. She continued: "And yet she was doomed to die in the flower of her youth, when her youngest child was scarcely six months old. Her illness was but short, but she was calm and resigned; and it was only for her children, especially the youngest, that she felt unhappy. When her end drew nigh, she bade me bring them to her. I obeyed. The younger ones knew nothing of their approaching loss, while the elder ones were quite overcome with grief. They stood around the bed; and she raised her feeble hands to heaven, and prayed over them; then kissing them in turn,

she dismissed them, and said to me, 'Be you a mother to them.' I gave her my hand. 'You are promising much, my child,' she said,—'a mother's fondness and a mother's care! I have often witnessed, by your tears of gratitude, that you know what is a mother's tenderness; show it to your brothers and sisters. And be dutiful and faithful to your father as a wife; you will be his comfort.' She inquired for him. He had retired to conceal his intolerable anguish,—he was heart-broken.

"Albert, you were in the room. She heard some one moving; she inquired who it was, and desired you to approach. She surveyed us both with a look of composure and satisfaction, expressive of her conviction that we should be happy,—happy with one another." Albert fell upon her neck, and kissed her, and exclaimed, "We are so, and we shall be so!" Even Albert, generally so tranquil, had quite lost his composure; and I was excited beyond expression.

"And such a being," she continued, "was to leave us, Werther! Great God, must we thus part with everything we hold dear in this world? Nobody felt this more acutely than the children; they cried and lamented for a long time afterwards, complaining that black men had carried away their dear mamma."

Charlotte rose. It aroused me; but I continued sitting, and held her hand. "Let us go," she said; "it grows late." She attempted to withdraw her hand; I held it still. "We shall see each other again," I exclaimed; "we shall recognise each other under every possible change! I am going," I continued, "going willingly; but, should I say forever, perhaps I may not keep my word. Adieu, Charlotte; adieu, Albert. We shall meet again." "Yes; to-morrow, I think," she answered with a smile. To-morrow! how I felt the word! Ah! she little thought, when she drew her hand away from mine. They walked down the avenue. I stood gazing after them in the moonlight. I threw myself upon the ground, and wept; I then sprang up, and ran out upon the terrace, and saw, under the shade of the linden-trees, her white dress disappearing near the garden-gate. I stretched out my arms, and she vanished.

BOOK II

OCT. 20.

WE arrived here yesterday. The ambassador is indisposed, and will not go out for some days. If he were less peevish and morose, all would be well. I see but too plainly that Heaven has destined me to severe trials; but courage! a light heart may bear anything. A light heart! I smile to find such a word proceeding from my pen. A little more light-heartedness would render me the happiest being under the sun. But must I despair of my talents and faculties, whilst others of far inferior abilities parade before me with the utmost self-satisfaction? Gracious Providence, to whom I owe all my powers, why didst thou not withhold some of those blessings I possess, and substitute in their place a feeling of self-confidence and contentment?

But patience! all will yet be well; for I assure you, my dear friend, you were right: since I have been obliged to associate continually with other people, and observe what they do, and how they employ themselves, I have become far better satisfied with myself. For we are so constituted by nature, that we are ever prone to compare ourselves with others; and our happiness or misery depends very much on the objects and persons around us. On this account nothing is more dangerous than solitude; there our imagination, always disposed to rise, taking a new flight on the wings of fancy, pictures to us a chain of beings of whom we seem the most inferior. All things appear greater than they really are, and all seem superior to us. This operation of the mind is quite natural; we so continually feel our own imperfections, and fancy we perceive in others the qualities we do not possess, attributing to them also all that we enjoy ourselves, that by this process we form the idea of a perfect, happy man,—a man, however, who only exists in our own imagination.

But when, in spite of weakness and disappointments, we set to work in earnest, and persevere steadily, we often find that, though obliged continually to tack, we make more way than others who have the assistance of wind and tide; and, in truth, there can be no greater satisfaction than to keep pace with others or outstrip them in the race.

Nov. 26.

I begin to find my situation here more tolerable, considering all circumstances. I find a great advantage in being much occupied; and the number of persons I meet, and their different pursuits, create a varied entertainment for me. I have formed the acquaintance of the Count C——, and I esteem him more and more every day. He is a man of strong understanding and great discernment; but though he sees farther than other people, he is not on that account cold in his manner, but capable of inspiring and returning the warmest affection. He appeared interested in me on one occasion, when I had to transact some business with him. He perceived, at the first word, that we understood each other, and that he could converse with me in a different tone from what he used with others. I cannot sufficiently esteem his frank and open kindness to me. It is the greatest and most genuine of pleasures to observe a great mind in sympathy with our own.

Dec. 24.

As I anticipated, the ambassador occasions me infinite annoyance. He is the most punctilious blockhead under heaven. He does everything step by step, with the trifling minuteness of an old woman; and he is a man whom it is impossible to please, because he is never pleased with himself. I like to do business regularly and cheerfully, and, when it is finished, to leave it. But he constantly returns my papers to me, saying, "They will do," but recommending me to look over them again, as "one may always improve by using a better word or a more appropriate particle." I then lose all patience, and wish myself at the Devil's. Not a conjunction, not an adverb, must be omitted; he has a deadly antipathy to all those transposi-

tions of which I am so fond; and if the music of our periods is not tuned to the established official key, he cannot comprehend our meaning. It is deplorable to be connected with such a fellow.

My acquaintance with the Count C—— is the only compensation for such an evil. He told me frankly, the other day, that he was much displeased with the difficulties and delays of the ambassador; that people like him are obstacles, both to themselves and to others. "But," added he, "one must submit, like a traveller who has to ascend a mountain; if the mountain was not there, the road would be both shorter and pleasanter; but there it is, and he must get over it.

The old man perceives the count's partiality for me; this annoys him, and he seizes every opportunity to depreciate the count in my hearing. I naturally defend him, and that only makes matters worse. Yesterday he made me indignant, for he also alluded to me. "The count," he said, "is a man of the world, and a good man of business; his style is good, and he writes with facility; but, like other geniuses, he has no solid learning." He looked at me with an expression that seemed to ask if I felt the blow. But it did not produce the desired effect; I despise a man who can think and act in such a manner. However, I made a stand, and answered with not a little warmth. The count, I said, was a man entitled to respect, alike for his character and his acquirements. I had never met a person whose mind was stored with more useful and extensive knowledge,—who had, in fact, mastered such an infinite variety of subjects, and who yet retained all his activity for the details of ordinary business. This was altogether beyond his comprehension; and I took my leave, lest my anger should be too highly excited by some new absurdity of his.

And you are to blame for all this,—you who persuaded me to bend my neck to this yoke by preaching a life of activity to me. If the man who plants vegetables, and carries his corn to town on market-days, is not more usefully employed than I am, then let me work ten years longer at the galleys to which I am now chained.

Oh the brilliant wretchedness, the weariness, that one is doomed to witness among the silly people whom we meet in society here! The ambition of rank! How they watch, how they toil, to gain precedence! What poor and contemptible passions are displayed in their utter nakedness! We have a woman here, for example, who never ceases to entertain the company with accounts of her family and her estates. Any stranger would consider her a silly being, whose head was turned by her pretensions to rank and property; but she is in reality even more ridiculous,—the daughter of a mere magistrate's clerk from this neighbourhood. I cannot understand how human beings can so debase themselves.

Every day I observe more and more the folly of judging of others by ourselves; and I have so much trouble with myself, and my own heart is in such constant agitation, that I am well content to let others pursue their own course, if they only allow me the same privilege.

What provokes me most is the unhappy extent to which distinctions of rank are carried. I know perfectly well how necessary are inequalities of condition, and I am sensible of the advantages I myself derive therefrom; but I would not have these institutions prove a barrier to the small chance of happiness which I may enjoy on this earth.

I have lately become acquainted with a Miss B——, a very agreeable girl, who has retained her natural manners in the midst of artificial life. Our first conversation pleased us both equally; and, at taking leave, I requested permission to visit her. She consented in so obliging a manner, that I waited with impatience for the arrival of the happy moment. She is not a native of this place, but resides here with her aunt. The countenance of the old daly is not prepossessing. I paid her much attention, addressing the greater part of my conversation to her; and, in less than half an hour, I discovered what her niece subsequently acknowledged to me, that her aged aunt, having but a small fortune and a still smaller share of understanding, enjoys no satisfaction except in the pedigree of her ancestors, no protection save in her noble birth, and no enjoyment but in looking from her castle over the heads of the humble citizens.

She was, no doubt, handsome in her youth, and in her early years probably trifled away her time in rendering many a poor youth the sport of her caprice: in her riper years she has submitted to the yoke of a veteran officer, who, in return for her person and her small independence, has spent with her what we may designate her age of brass. He is dead; and she is now a widow, and deserted. She spends her iron age alone, and would not be approached, except for the loveliness of her niece.

JAN. 8. 1772.

What beings are men, whose whole thoughts are occupied with form and ceremony, who for years together devote their mental and physical exertions to the task of advancing themselves but one step, and endeavouring to occupy a higher place at the table! Not that such persons would otherwise want employment: on the contrary, they give themselves much trouble by neglecting important business for such petty trifles. Last week a question of precedence arose at a sledging-party, and all our amusement was spoiled.

The silly creatures cannot see that it is not place which constitutes real greatness, since the man who occupies the first place but seldom plays the principal part. How many kings are governed by their ministers, how many ministers by their secretaries? Who, in such cases, is really the chief? He, as it seems to me, who can see through the others, and possesses strength or skill enough to make their power or passions subservient to the execution of his own designs.

JAN. 20.

I must write to you from this place, my dear Charlotte, from a small room in a country inn, where I have taken shelter from a severe storm. During my whole residence in that wretched place, D——, where I lived amongst strangers,—strangers, indeed, to this heart,—I never at any time felt the smallest inclination to correspond with you; but in this cottage, in this retirement, in this solitude, with the snow and hail beating against my lattice-pane, you are my first thought. The instant I entered, your figure rose up before me, and the remembrance,—O my Charlotte, the

sacred, tender remembrance! Gracious Heaven, restore to me the happy moment of our first acquaintance!

Could you but see me, my dear Charlotte, in the whirl of dissipation,—how my senses are dried up, but my heart is at no time full. I enjoy no single moment of happiness: all is vain,—nothing touches me. I stand, as it were, before the raree-show: I see the little puppets move, and I ask whether it is not an optical illusion. I am amused with these puppets, or rather, I am myself one of them; but when I sometimes grasp my neighbour's hand, I feel that it is not natural, and I withdraw mine with a shudder. In the evening I say I will enjoy the next morning's sunrise, and yet I remain in bed: in the day I promise to ramble by moonlight; and I, nevertheless, remain at home. I know not why I rise, nor why I go to sleep.

The leaven which animated my existence is gone: the charm which cheered me in the gloom of night, and aroused me from my morning slumbers, is forever fled.

I have found but one being here to interest me, a Miss B——. She resembles you, my dear Charlotte, if any one can possibly resemble you. "Ah!" you will say, "he has learned how to pay fine compliments." And this is partly true. I have been very agreeable lately, as it was not in my power to be otherwise. I have, moreover, a deal of wit: and the ladies say that no one understands flattery better, or falsehoods you will add; since the one accomplishment invariably accompanies the other. But I must tell you of Miss B——. She has abundance of soul, which flashes from her deep blue eyes. Her rank is a torment to her, and satisfies no one desire of her heart. She would gladly retire from this whirl of fashion, and we often picture to ourselves a life of undisturbed happiness in distant scenes of rural retirement: and then we speak of you, my dear Charlotte; for she knows you, and renders homage to your merits; but her homage is not exacted, but voluntary,—she loves you, and delights to hear you made the subject of conversation.

Oh that I were sitting at your feet in your favourite little room, with the dear children playing around us! If they became troublesome to you, I would tell them some appall-

ing goblin story; and they would crowd round me with silent attention. The sun is setting in glory; his last rays are shining on the snow, which covers the face of the country: the storm is over, and I must return to my dungeon. Adieu! Is Albert with you? and what is he to you? God forgive the question.

FEB. 8.

For a week past we have had the most wretched weather: but this to me is a blessing; for, during my residence here, not a single fine day has beamed from the heavens but has been lost to me by the intrusion of somebody. During the severity of rain, sleet, frost, and storm, I congratulate myself that it cannot be worse in-doors than abroad, nor worse abroad than it is within doors; and so I become reconciled. When the sun rises bright in the morning, and promises a glorious day, I never omit to exclaim, "There, now, they have another blessing from Heaven, which they will be sure to destroy: they spoil everything,—health, fame, happiness, amusement; and they do this generally through folly, ignorance, or imbecility, and always, according to their own account, with the best intentions!" I could often beseech them, on my bended knees, to be less resolved upon their own destruction.

FEB. 17.

I fear that my ambassador and I shall not continue much longer together. He is really growing past endurance. He transacts his business in so ridiculous a manner that I am often compelled to contradict him, and do things my own way; and then, of course, he thinks them very ill done. He complained of me lately on this account at court; and the minister gave me a reprimand,—a gentle one it is true, but still a reprimand. In consequence of this I was about to tender my resignation, when I received a letter, to which I submitted with great respect, on account of the high, noble, and generous spirit which dictated it. He endeavoured to soothe my excessive sensibility, paid a tribute to my extreme ideas of duty, of good example, and of perseverance in business, as the fruit of my youthful ardour,—an impulse

which he did not seek to destroy, but only to moderate, that it might have proper play and be productive of good. So now I am at rest for another week, and no longer at variance with myself. Content and peace of mind are valuable things: I could wish, my dear friend, that these precious jewels were less transitory.

FEB. 20.

God bless you, my dear friends, and may he grant you that happiness which he denies to me!

I thank you, Albert, for having deceived me. I waited for the news that your wedding-day was fixed; and I intended on that day, with solemnity, to take down Charlotte's profile from the walls, and to bury it with some other papers I possess. You are now united, and her picture still remains here. Well, let it remain! Why should it not? I know that I am still one of your society, that I still occupy a place uninjured in Charlotte's heart, that I hold the second place therein; and I intend to keep it. Oh, I should become mad if she could forget! Albert, that thought is hell! Farewell, Albert,—farewell, angel of heaven,—farewell, Charlotte!

MARCH 15.

I have just had a sad adventure, which will drive me away from here. I lose all patience! Death! It is not be remedied; and you alone are to blame, for you urged and impelled me to fill a post for which I was by no means suited. I have now reason to be satisfied, and so have you! But, that you may not again attribute this fatality to my impetuous temper, I send you, my dear sir, a plain and simple narration of the affair, as a mere chronicler of facts would describe it.

The Count of O—— likes and distinguishes me. It is well known, and I have mentioned this to you a hundred times. Yesterday I dined with him. It is the day on which the nobility are accustomed to assemble at his house in the evening. I never once thought of the assembly, nor that we subalterns did not belong to such society. Well, I dined with the count; and after dinner we adjourned to the large hall. We walked up and down together; and I conversed with

him, and with Colonel B——, who joined us; and in this manner the hour for the assembly approached. God knows, I was thinkong of nothing, when who should enter but the honourable Lady S——, accompanied by her noble husband and their silly, scheming daughter, with her small waist and flat neck; and, with disdainful looks and a haughty air, they passed me by. As I heartily detest the whole race, I determined upon going away; and only waited till the count had disengaged himself from their impertinent prattle, to take leave, when the agreeable Miss B—— came in. As I never meet her without experiencing a heartfelt pleasure, I stayed and talked to her, leaning over the back of her chair, and did not perceive, till after some time, that she seemed a little confused, and ceased to answer me with her usual ease of manner. I was struck with it. "Heavens!" I said to myself, "can she, too, be like the rest?" I felt annoyed, and was about to withdraw; but I remained, notwithstanding, forming excuses for her conduct fancying she did not mean it, and still hoping to receive some friendly recognition. The rest of the company now arrived. There was the Baron F——, in an entire suit that dated from the coronation of Francis I.; the Chancellor N——, with his deaf wife; the shabbily dressed I——, whose old-fashioned coat bore evidence of modern repairs: this crowned the whole. I conversed with some of my acquaintances, but they answered me laconically. I was engaged in observing Miss B——, and did not notice that the women were whispering at the end of the room, that the murmur extended by degrees to the men, that Madame S—— addressed the count with much warmth (this was all related to me subsequently by Miss B——); till at length the count came up to me, and took me to the window. "You know our ridiculous customs," he said. "I perceive the company is rather displeased at your being here. I would not on any account"—"I beg your excellency's pardon!" I exclaimed. "I ought to have thought of this before, but I know you will forgive this little inattention. I was going," I added, "some time ago, but my evil genius detained me." And I smiled and bowed to take my leave. He shook me by the hand, in a manner which expressed everything. I hastened

at once from the illustrious assembly, sprang into a carriage, and drove to M——. I contemplated the setting sun from the top of the hill, and read that beautiful passage in Homer where Ulysses is entertained by the hospitable herdsmen. This was indeed delightful.

I returned home to supper in the evening. But few persons were assembled in the room. They had turned up a corner of the tablecloth, and were playing at dice. The good-natured A—— came in. He laid down his hat when he saw me, approached me, and said in a low tone, "You have met with a disagreeable adventure." "I!" I exclaimed. "The count obliged you to withdraw from the assembly." "Deuce take the assembly!" said I. "I was very glad to be gone." "I am delighted," he added, "that you take it so lightly. I am only sorry that it is already so much spoken of." The circumstance then began to pain me. I fancied that every one who sat down, and even looked at me, was thinking of this incident; and my heart became embittered.

And now I could plunge a dagger into my bosom when I hear myself everywhere pitied, and observe the triumph of my enemies, who say that this is always the case with vain persons, whose heads are turned with conceit, who affect to despise forms and such petty, idle nonsense.

Say what you will of fortitude, but show me the man who can patiently endure the laughter of fools, when they have obtained an advantage over him. 'Tis only when their nonsense is without foundation that one can suffer it without complaint.

MARCH 16.

Everything conspires against me. I met Miss B—— walking to-day. I could not help joining her; and when we were at a little distance from her companions, I expressed my sense of her altered manner towards me. "O Werther!" she said, in a tone of emotion, "you, who know my heart, how could you so ill interpret my distress? What did I not suffer for you from the moment you entered the room! I foresaw it all; a hundred times was I on the point of mentioning it to you. I knew that the S——s and T——s, with

their husbands, would quit the room rather than remain in your company. I knew that the count would not break with them: and now so much is said about it." "How!" I exclaimed, and endeavoured to conceal my emotion; for all that Adelin had mentioned to me yesterday recurred to me painfully at that moment. "Oh, how much it has already cost me!" said this amiable girl, while her eyes filled with tears. I could scarcely contain myself, and was ready to throw myself at her feet. "Explain yourself!" I cried. Tears flowed down her cheeks. I became quite frantic. She wiped them away, without attempting to conceal them. "You know my aunt," she continued; "she was present: and in what light does she consider the affair! Last night, and this morning, Werther, I was compelled to listen to a lecture upon my acquaintance with you. I have been obliged to hear you condemned and depreciated; and I could not—I dared not—say much in your defence."

Every word she uttered was a dagger to my heart. She did not feel what a mercy it would have been to conceal everything from me. She told me, in addition, all the impertinence that would be further circulated, and how the malicious would triumph; how they would rejoice over the punishment of my pride, over my humiliation for that want of esteem for others with which I had often been reproached. To hear all this, Wilhelm, uttered by her in a voice of the most sincere sympathy, awakened all my passions; and I am still in a state of extreme excitement. I wish I could find a man to jeer me about this event. I would sacrifice him to my resentment. The sight of his blood might possibly be a relief to my fury. A hundred times have I seized a dagger, to give ease to this oppressed heart. Naturalists tell of a noble race of horses that instinctively open a vein with their teeth, when heated and exhausted by a long course, in order to breathe more freely, I am often tempted to open a vein, to procure for myself everlasting liberty.

MARCH 24.

I have tendered my resignation to the court. I hope it will be accepted, and you will forgive me for not having

previously consulted you. It is necessary I should leave this place. I know you all will urge me to stay, and therefore—I beg you will soften this news to my mother. I am unable to do anything for myself: how, then, should I be competent to assist others? It will afflict her that I should have interrupted that career which would have made me first privy councillor, and then minister, and that I should look behind me, in place of advancing. Argue as you will, combine all the reasons which should have induced me to remain,—I am going: that is sufficient. But, that you may not be ignorant of my destination, I may mention that the Prince of —— is here. He is much pleased with my company; and, having heard of my intention to resign, he has invited me to his country house, to pass the spring months with him. I shall be left completely my own master; and as we agree on all subjects but one, I shall try my fortune, and accompany him.

APRIL 19.

Thanks for both your letters. I delayed my reply, and withheld this letter, till I should obtain an answer from the court. I feared my mother might apply to the minister to defeat my purpose. But my request is granted, my resignation is accepted. I shall not recount with what reluctance it was accorded, nor relate what the minister has written: you would only renew your lamentations. The Crown Prince has sent me a present of five and twenty ducats; and, indeed, such goodness has affected me to tears. For this reason I shall not require from my mother the money for which I lately applied.

MAY 5.

I leave this place to-morrow; and as my native place is only six miles from the high-road, I intend to visit it once more, and recall the happy dreams of my childhood. I shall enter at the same gate through which I came with my mother, when, after my father's death, she left that delightful retreat to immure herself in your melancholy town. Adieu, my dear friend: you shall hear of my future career.

MAY 9.

I have paid my visit to my native place with all the devotion of a pilgrim, and have experienced many unexpected emotions. Near the great elm-tree, which is a quarter of a league from the village, I got out of the carriage, and sent it on before, that alone and on foot I might enjoy vividly and heartily all the pleasure of my recollections. I stood there under that same elm which was formerly the term and object of my walks. How things have since changed! Then, in happy ignorance, I sighed for a world I did not know, where I hoped to find every pleasure and enjoyment which my heart could desire; and now, on my return from that wide world, O my friend, how many disappointed hopes and unsuccessful plans have I brought back!

As I contemplated the mountains which lay stretched out before me, I thought how often they had been the object of my dearest desires. Here used I to sit for hours together with my eyes bent upon them, ardently longing to wander in the shade of those woods, to lose myself in those valleys, which form so delightful an object in the distance. With what reluctance did I leave this charming spot, when my hour of recreation was over, and my leave of absence expired! I drew near to the village: all the well-known old summer-houses and gardens were recognized again; I disliked the new ones, and all other alterations which had taken place. I entered the village, and all my former feelings returned. I cannot, my dear friend, enter into details, charming as were my sensations; they would be dull in the narration. I had intended to lodge in the market-place, near our old house. As soon as I entered, I perceived that the schoolroom, where our childhood had been taught by that good old woman, was converted into a shop, I called to mind the sorrow, the heaviness, the tears, and oppression of heart which which I experienced in that confinement. Every step produced some particular impression. A pilgrim in the Holy Land does not meet so many spots pregnant with tender recollections, and his soul is hardly moved with greater devotion. One incident will serve for illustration. I followed the course of a stream to a farm, formerly a delightful walk of mine, and paused at the spot where, when boys,

we used to amuse ourselves making ducks and drakes upon the water. I recollected so well how I used formerly to watch the course of that same stream, following it with inquiring eagerness, forming romantic ideas of the countries it was to pass through; but my imagination was soon exhausted; while the water continued flowing farther and farther on, till my fancy became bewildered by the contemplation of an invisible distance. Exactly such, my dear friend, so happy and so confined, were the thoughts of our good ancestors. Their feelings and their poetry were fresh as childhood. And when Ulysses talks of the immeasurable sea and boundless earth, his epithets are true, natural, deeply felt, and mysterious. Of what importance is it that I have learned, with every schoolboy, that the world is round? Man needs but little earth for enjoyment, and still less for his final repose.

I am at present with the prince at his hunting-lodge. He is a man with whom one can live happily. He is honest and unaffected. There are, however, some strange characters about him, whom I cannot at all understand. They do not seem vicious, and yet they do not carry the appearance of thoroughly honest men. Sometimes I am disposed to believe them honest, and yet I cannot persuade myself to confide in them. It grieves me to hear the prince occasionally talk of things which he has only read or heard of, and always with the same view in which they have been represented by others.

He values my understanding and talents more highly than my heart, but I am proud of the latter only. It is the sole source of everything,—of our strength, happiness, and misery. All the knowledge I possess every one else can acquire, but my heart is exclusively my own.

MAY 25.

I have had a plan in my head of which I did not intend to speak to you until it was accomplished: now that it has failed, I may as well mention it. I wished to enter the army, and had long been desirous of taking the step. This, indeed, was the chief reason for my coming here with the prince, as he is a general in the —— service. I communicated my

design to him during one of our walks together. He disapproved of it, and it would have been actual madness not to have listened to his reasons.

JUNE 11.

Say what you will, I can remain here no longer. Why should I remain? Time hangs heavy upon my hands. The prince is as gracious to me as any one could be, and yet I am not at my ease. There is, indeed, nothing in common between us. He is a man of understanding, but quite of the ordinary kind. His conversation affords me no more amusement than I should derive from the perusal of a well-written book. I shall remain here a week longer, and then start again on my travels. My drawings are the best things I have done since I came here. The prince has a taste for the arts, and would improve if his mind were not fettered by cold rules and mere technical ideas. I often lose patience, when, with a glowing imagination, I am giving expression to art and nature, he interferes with learned suggestions, and uses at random the technical phraseology of artists.

JULY 16.

Once more I am a wanderer, a pilgrim, through the world. But what else are you!

JULY 18.

Whither am I going? I will tell you in confidence. I am obliged to continue a fortnight longer here, and then I think it would be better for me to visit the mines in ——. But I am only deluding myself thus. The fact is, I wish to be near Charlotte again,—that is all. I smile at the suggestions of my heart, and obey its dictates.

JULY 29.

No, no! it is yet well—all is well! I her husband! O God, who gave me being, if thou hadst destined this happiness for me, my whole life would have been one continual thanksgiving! But I will not murmur,—forgive these tears, forgive these fruitless wishes. She—my wife! Oh, the very thought of folding that dearest of Heaven's creatures

in my arms! Dear Wilhelm, my whole frame feels convulsed when I see Albert put his arms round her slender waist!

And shall I avow it? Why should I not, Wilhelm? She would have been happier with me than with him. Albert is not the man to satisfy the wishes of such a heart. He wants a certain sensibility; he wants—in short, their hearts do not beat in unison. How often, my dear friend, in reading a passage from some interesting book, when my heart and Charlotte's seemed to meet, and in a hundred other instances when our sentiments were unfolded by the story of some fictitious character, have I felt that we were made for each other! But, dear Wilhelm, he loves her with his whole soul; and what does not such a love deserve?

I have been interrupted by an insufferable visit. I have dried my tears, and composed my thoughts. Adieu, my best friend!

AUG. 4.

I am not alone unfortunate. All men are disappointed in their hopes, and deceived in their expectations. I have paid a visit to my good old woman under the lime-trees. The eldest boy ran out to meet me: his exclamation of joy brought out his mother, but she had a very melancholy look. Her first word was: "Alas! dear sir, my little John is dead." He was the youngest of her children. I was silent. "And my husband has returned from Switzerland without any money; and if some kind people had not assisted him, he must have begged his way home. He was taken ill with fever on his journey." I could answer nothing, but made the little one a present. She invited me to take some fruit. I complied, and left the place with a sorrowful heart.

AUG. 21.

My sensations are constantly changing. Sometimes a happy prospect opens before me; but alas! it is only for a moment; and then, when I am lost in reverie, I cannot help saying to myself, "If Albert were to die?—Yes, she would become—and I should be"—and so I pursue a chimera, till it leads me to the edge of a precipice at which I shudder.

When I pass through the same gate, and walk along the same road which first conducted me to Charlotte, my heart sinks within me at the change that has since taken place. All, all is altered! No sentiment, no pulsation of my heart, is the same. My sensations are such as would occur to some departed prince whose spirit should return to visit the superb palace which he had built in happy times, adorned with costly magnificence, and left to a beloved son, but whose glory he should find departed, and its halls deserted and in ruins.

SEPT. 3.

I sometimes cannot understand how she can love another, how she dares love another, when I love nothing in this world so completely, so devotedly, as I love her, when I know only her, and have no other possession than her in the world.

SEPT. 4.

It is even so! As Nature puts on her autumn tints, it becomes autumn with me and around me. My leaves are sear and yellow, and the neighbouring trees are divested of their foliage. Do you remember my writing to you about a peasant-boy shortly after my arrival here? I have just made inquiries about him in Walheim. They say he has been dismissed from his service, and is now avoided by every one. I met him yesterday on the road, going to a neighbouring village. I spoke to him, and he told me his story. It interested me exceedingly, as you will easily understand when I repeat it to you. But why should I trouble you? Why should I not reserve all my sorrow for myself? Why should I continue to give you occasion to pity and blame me? But no matter: this also is part of my destiny.

At first the peasant-lad answered my inquiries with a sort of subdued melancholy, which seemed to me the mark of a timid disposition; but as we grew to understand each other, he spoke with less reserve, and openly confessed his faults, and lamented his misfortune. I wish, my dear friend, I could give proper expression to his language. He told me, with a sort of pleasurable recollection, that after my de-

parture his passion for his mistress increased daily, until at last he neither knew what he did nor what he said, nor what was to become of him. He could neither eat nor drink nor sleep: he felt a sense of suffocation; he disobeyed all orders, and forgot all commands involuntarily; he seemed as if pursued by an evil spirit, till one day, knowing that his mistress had gone to an upper chamber, he had followed, or rather, been drawn after her. As she proved deaf to his entreaties, he had recourse to violence. He knows not what happened; but he called God to witness that his intentions to her were honourable, and that he desired nothing more sincerely than that they should marry, and pass their lives together. When he had come to this point, he began to hesitate, as if there was something which he had not courage to utter, till at length he acknowledged with some confusion certain little confidences she had encouraged, and liberties she had allowed.

He broke off two or three times in his narration, and assured me most earnestly that he had no wish to make her bad, as he termed it, for he loved her still as sincerely as ever; that the tale had never before escaped his lips, and was only now told to convince me that he was not utterly lost and abandoned. And here, my dear friend, I must commence the old song which you know I utter eternally. If I could only represent the man as he stood, and stands now before me,—could I only give his true expressions, you would feel compelled to sympathise in his fate. But enough: you, who know my misfortune and my disposition, can easily comprehend the attraction which draws me towards every unfortunate being, but particularly towards him whose story I have recounted.

On perusing this letter a second time, I find I have omitted the conclusion of my tale; but it is easily supplied. She became reserved towards him, at the instigation of her brother who had long hated him, and desired his expulsion from the house, fearing that his sister's second marriage might deprive his children of the handsome fortune they expected from her; as she is childless. He was dismissed at length; and the whole affair occasioned so much scandal that the mistress dared not take him back, even if she had wished

it. She has since hired another servant, with whom, they say, her brother is equally displeased, and whom she is likely to marry; but my informant assures me that he himself is determined not to survive such a catastrophe.

This story is neither exaggerated nor embellished; indeed, I have weakened and impaired it in the narration, by the necessity of using the more refined expressions of society.

This love, then, this constancy, this passion, is no poetical fiction. It is actual, and dwells in its greatest purity amongst that class of mankind whom we term rude, uneducated. We are the educated, not the perverted! But read this story with attention, I implore you. I am tranquil to-day, for I have been employed upon this narration: you see by my writing that I am not so agitated as usual. Read and re-read this tale, Wilhelm: it is the history of your friend! My fortune has been and will be similar; and I am neither half so brave nor half so determined as the poor wretch with whom I hesitate to compare myself.

SEPT. 5.

Charlotte had written a letter to her husband in the country, where he was detained by business. It commenced, "My dearest love, return as soon as possible: I await you with a thousand raptures." A friend who arrived, brought word that, for certain reasons, he could not return immediately. Charlotte's letter was not forwarded, and the same evening it fell into my hands. I read it, and smiled. She asked the reason. "What a heavenly treasure is imagination!" I exclaimed; "I fancied for a moment that this was written to me."

She paused, and seemed displeased. I was silent.

SEPT. 6.

It cost me much to part with the blue coat which I wore the first time I danced with Charlotte. But I could not possibly wear it any longer. But I have ordered a new one, precisely similar, even to the collar and sleeves, as well as a new waistcoat and pantaloons.

But it does not produce the same effect upon me. I know not how it is, but I hope in time I shall like it better.

SEPT. 12.

She has been absent for some days. She went to meet Albert. To-day I visited her: she rose to receive me, and I kissed her hand most tenderly.

A canary at the moment flew from a mirror, and settled upon her shoulder. "Here is a new friend," she observed, while she made him perch upon her hand: "he is a present for the children. What a dear he is! Look at him! When I feed him, he flutters with his wings, and pecks so nicely. He kisses me, too,—only look!"

She held the bird to her mouth; and he pressed her sweet lips with so much fervour that he seemed to feel the excess of bliss which he enjoyed.

"He shall kiss you too," she added; and then she held the bird towards me. His little beak moved from her mouth to mine, and the delightful sensation seemed like the forerunner of the sweetest bliss.

"A kiss," I observed, "does not seem to satisfy him: he wishes for food, and seems disappointed by these unsatisfactory endearments."

"But he eats out of my mouth," she continued, and extended her lips to him containing seed; and she smiled with all the charm of a being who has allowed an innocent participation of her love.

I turned my face away. She should not act thus. She ought not to excite my imagination with such displays of heavenly innocence and happiness, nor awaken my heart from its slumbers, in which it dreams of the worthlessness of life! And why not? Because she knows how much I love her.

SEPT. 15.

It makes me wretched, Wilhelm, to think that there should be men incapable of appreciating the few things which possess a real value in life. You remember the walnut-trees at S——, under which I used to sit with Charlotte, during my visits to the worthy old vicar. Those glorious trees, the very sight of which has so often filled my heart with joy, how they adorned and refreshed the parsonage-yard, with their wide-extended branches! and how pleasing was our re-

membrance of the good old pastor, by whose hands they were planted so many years ago! The schoolmaster has frequently mentioned his name. He had it from his grandfather. He must have been a most excellent man; and, under the shade of those old trees, his memory was ever venerated by me.

The schoolmaster informed us yesterday, with tears in his eyes, that those trees had been felled. Yes, cut to the ground! I could, in my wrath, have slain the monster who struck the first stroke. And I must endure this!—I, who, if I had had two such trees in my own court, and one had died from old age, should have wept with real affliction. But there is some comfort left,—such a thing is sentiment,—the whole village murmurs at the misfortune; and I hope the vicar's wife will soon find, by the cessation of the villagers' presents, how much she has wounded the feelings of the neighbourhood. It was she who did it,—the wife of the present incumbent (our good old man is dead),—a tall, sickly creature, who is so far right to disregard the world as the world totally disregards her. The silly being affects to be learned, pretends to examine the canonical books, lends her aid towards the new-fashioned reformation of Christendom, moral and critical, and shrugs up her shoulders at the mention of Lavater's enthusiasm. Her health is destroyed, on account of which she is prevented from having any enjoyment here below. Only such a creature could have cut down my walnut-trees! I can never pardon it. Hear her reasons. The falling leaves made the court wet and dirty; the branches obstructed the light; boys threw stones at the nuts when they were ripe, and the noise affected her nerves, and disturbed her profound meditations, when she was weighing the difficulties of Kennicot, Semler, and Michaels. Finding that all the parish, particularly the old people, were displeased, I asked why they allowed it. "Ah, sir!" they replied, "when the steward orders, what can we poor peasants do?" But one thing has happened well. The steward and the vicar (who for once thought to reap some advantage from the caprices of his wife) intended to divide the trees between them. The revenue-office, being informed of it, revived an old claim to the ground where the trees had

stood, and sold them to the best bidder. There they still lie on the ground. If I were the sovereign, I should know how to deal with them all,—vicar, steward, and revenue-office. Sovereign, did I say? I should in that case care little about the trees that grew in the country.

OCT. 10.

Only to gaze upon her dark eyes is to me a source of happiness! And what grieves me is that Albert does not seem so happy as he—hoped to be—as I should have been—if— I am no friend to these pauses, but here I cannot express it otherwise; and probably I am explicit enough.

OCT. 12.

Ossian has superseded Homer in my heart. To what a world does the illustrious bard carry me! To wander over pathless wilds, surrounded by impetuous whirlwinds, where, by the feeble light of the moon, we see the spirits of our ancestors; to hear from the mountain-tops, mid the roar of torrents, their plaintive sounds issuing from deep caverns, and the sorrowful lamentations of a maiden who sighs and expires on the mossy tomb of the warrior by whom she was adored. I meet this bard with silver hair; he wanders in the valley; he seeks the footsteps of his fathers, and, alas! he finds only their tombs. Then, contemplating the pale moon, as she sinks beneath the waves of the rolling sea, the memory of bygone days strikes the mind of the hero,—days when approaching danger invigorated the brave, and the moon shone upon his bark laden with spoils, and returning in triumph. When I read in his countenance deep sorrow, when I see his dying glory sink exhausted into the grave, as he inhales new and heart-thrilling delight from his approaching union with his beloved, and he casts a look on the cold earth and the tall grass which is so soon to cover him, and then exclaims, "The traveller will come,—he will come who has seen my beauty, and he will ask, 'Where is the bard,—where is the illustrious son of Fingal?' He will walk over my tomb, and will seek me in vain!" Then, O my friend, I could instantly, like a true and noble knight, draw my sword, and deliver my prince from the long and painful

languor of a living death, and dismiss my own soul to follow the demigod whom my hand had set free!

Oct. 19.

Alas! the void—the fearful void, which I feel in my bosom! Sometimes I think, if I could only once—but once, press her to my heart, this dreadful void would be filled.

Oct. 26.

Yes, I feel certain, Wilhelm, and every day I become more certain, that the existence of any being whatever is of very little consequence. A friend of Charlotte's called to see her just now. I withdrew into a neighbouring apartment, and took up a book; but, finding I could not read, I sat down to write. I heard them converse in an undertone: they spoke upon indifferent topics, and retailed the news of the town. One was going to be married; another was ill, very ill,—she had a dry cough, her face was growing thinner daily, and she had occasional fits. "N—— is very unwell, too," said Charlotte. "His limbs begin to swell already," answered the other; and my lively imagination carried me at once to the beds of the infirm. There I see them struggling against death, with all the agonies of pain and horror; and these women, Wilhelm, talk of all this with as much indifference as one would mention the death of a stranger. And when I look around the apartment where I now am,—when I see Charlotte's apparel lying before me, and Albert's writings, and all those articles of furniture which are so familiar to me, even to the very inkstand which I am using,—when I think what I am to this family—everything. My friends esteem me; I often contribute to their happiness, and my heart seems as if it could not beat without them; and yet—if I were to die, if I were to be summoned from the midst of this circle, would they feel—or how long would they feel —the void which my loss would make in their existence? How long! Yes, such is the frailty of man, that even there, where he has the greatest consciousness of his own being, where he makes the strongest and most forcible impression, even in the memory, in the heart of his beloved, there also he must perish,—vanish,—and that quickly.

Oct. 27.

I could tear open my bosom with vexation to think how little we are capable of influencing the feelings of each other. No one can communicate to me those sensations of love, joy, rapture, and delight which I do not naturally possess; and though my heart may glow with the most lively affection, I cannot make the happiness of one in whom the same warmth is not inherent.

Oct. 27; Evening.

I possess so much, but my love for her absorbs it all. I possess so much, but without her I have nothing.

Oct. 30.

One hundred times have I been on the point of embracing her. Heavens! what a torment it is to see so much loveliness passing and repassing before us, and yet not dare to lay hold of it! And laying hold is the most natural of human instincts. Do not children touch everything they see? And I!

Nov. 3.

Witness, Heaven, how often I lie down in my bed with a wish, and even a hope, that I may never awaken again! And in the morning, when I open my eyes, I behold the sun once more, and am wretched. If I were whimsical, I might blame the weather, or an acquaintance, or some personal disappointment, for my discontented mind; and then this insupportable load of trouble would not rest entirely upon myself. But, alas! I feel it too sadly; I am alone the cause of my own woe, am I not? Truly, my own bosom contains the source of all my sorrow, as it previously contained the source of all my pleasure. Am I not the same being who once enjoyed an excess of happiness, who at every step saw paradise open before him, and whose heart was ever expanded towards the whole world? And this heart is now dead; no sentiment can revive it. My eyes are dry; and my senses, no more refreshed by the influence of soft tears, wither and consume my brain. I suffer much, for I have lost the only charm of life: that active, sacred power which created worlds around me,—it is no more. When I look from

my window at the distant hills, and behold the morning sun breaking through the mists, and illuminating the country around, which is still wrapped in silence, whilst the soft stream winds gently through the willows, which have shed their leaves; when glorious Nature displays all her beauties before me, and her wondrous prospects are ineffectual to extract one tear of joy from my withered heart,—I feel that in such a moment I stand like a reprobate before heaven, hardened, insensible, and unmoved. Oftentimes do I then bend my knee to the earth, and implore God for the blessing of tears, as the desponding labourer in some scorching climate prays for the dews of heaven to moisten his parched corn.

But I feel that God does not grant sunshine or rain to our importunate entreaties. And oh, those bygone days, whose memory now torments me! why were they so fortunate? Because I then waited with patience for the blessings of the Eternal, and received his gifts with the grateful feelings of a thankful heart.

Nov. 8.

Charlotte has reproved me for my excesses, with so much tenderness and goodness! I have lately been in the habit of drinking more wine than heretofore. "Don't do it," she said; "think of Charlotte!" "Think of you!" I answered; "need you bid me do so? Think of you—I do not think of you: you are ever before my soul! This very morning I sat on the spot where, a few days ago, you descended from the carriage, and—" She immediately changed the subject to prevent me from pursuing it farther. My dear friend, my energies are all prostrated; she can do with me what she pleases.

Nov. 15.

I thank you, Wilhelm, for your cordial sympathy, for your excellent advice; and I implore you to be quiet. Leave me to my sufferings. In spite of my wretchedness, I have still strength enough for endurance. I revere religion,—you know I do. I feel that it can impart strength to the feeble and comfort to the afflicted; but does it affect all men equally? Consider this vast universe: you will see thousands

for whom it has never existed, thousands for whom it will never exist, whether it be preached to them or not; and must it, then, necessarily exist for me? Does not the Son of God himself say that they are his whom the Father has given to him? Have I been given to Him? What if the Father will retain me for himself, as my heart sometimes suggests? I pray you, do not misinterpret this. Do not extract derision from my harmless words. I pour out my whole soul before you. Silence were otherwise preferable to me, but I need not shrink from a subject of which few know more than I do myself. What is the destiny of man, but to fill up the measure of his sufferings, and to drink his allotted cup of bitterness? And if that same cup proved bitter to the God of heaven, under a human form, why should I affect a foolish pride, and call it sweet? Why should I be ashamed of shrinking at that fearful moment when my whole being will tremble between existence and annihilation; when a remembrance of the past, like a flash of lightning, will illuminate the dark gulf of futurity; when everything shall dissolve around me, and the whole world vanish away? Is not this the voice of a creature oppressed beyond all resource, self-deficient, about to plunge into inevitable destruction, and groaning deeply at its inadequate strength: "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" And should I feel ashamed to utter the same expression? Should I not shudder at a prospect which had its fears even for him who folds up the heavens like a garment?

Nov. 21.

She does not feel, she does not know that she is preparing a poison which will destroy us both; and I drink deeply of the draught which is to prove my destruction. What mean those looks of kindness with which she often—often? no, not often, but sometimes—regards me, that complacency with which she hears the involuntary sentiments which frequently escape me, and the tender pity for my sufferings which appears in her countenance?

Yesterday, when I took leave, she seized me by the hand, and said, "Adieu, dear Werther." Dear Werther! It was the first time she ever called me "dear:" the sound sunk deep

into my heart. I have repeated it a hundred times; and last night, on going to bed, and talking to myself of various things, I suddenly said, "Good night, dear Werther!" and then could not but laugh at myself.

Nov. 22.

I cannot pray, "Leave her to me!" and yet she often seems to belong to me. I cannot pray, "Give her to me!" for she is another's. In this way I affect mirth over my troubles; and if I had time, I could compose a whole litany of antitheses.

Nov. 24.

She is sensible of my sufferings. This morning her look pierced my very soul. I found her alone, and she was silent; she steadfastly surveyed me. I no longer saw in her face the charms of beauty or the fire of genius; these had disappeared. But I was affected by an expression much more touching,—a look of the deepest sympathy and of the softest pity. Why was I afraid to throw myself at her feet? Why did I not dare to take her in my arms, and answer her by a thousand kisses? She had recourse to her piano for relief, and in a low and sweet voice accompanied the music with delicious sounds. Her lips never appeared so lovely: they seemed but just to open, that they might imbibe the sweet tones which issued from the instrument, and return the heavenly vibration from her lovely mouth. Oh, who can express my sensations! I was quite overcome, and bending down, pronounced this vow: "Beautiful lips, which the angels guard, never will I seek to profane your purity with a kiss." And yet, my friend, oh, I wish—but my heart is darkened by doubt and indecision—could I but taste felicity, and then die to expiate the sin! What sin?

Nov. 26.

Oftentimes I say to myself, "Thou alone art wretched: all other mortals are happy; none are distressed like thee." Then I read a passage in an ancient poet, and I seem to understand my own heart! I have so much to endure! Have men before me ever been so wretched?

Nov. 30.

I shall never be myself again! Wherever I go, some fatality occurs to distract me. Even to-day—alas, for our destiny! alas, for human nature!

About dinner-time I went to walk by the river-side, for I had no appetite. Everything around seemed gloomy; a cold and damp easterly wind blew from the mountains, and black, heavy clouds spread over the plain. I observed at a distance a man in a tattered coat; he was wandering among the rocks, and seemed to be looking for plants. When I approached, he turned round at the noise; and I saw that he had an interesting countenance, in which a settled melancholy, strongly marked by benevolence, formed the principal feature. His long black hair was divided, and flowed over his shoulders. As his garb betokened a person of the lower order, I thought he would not take it ill if I inquired about his business; and I therefore asked what he was seeking. He replied, with a deep sigh, that he was looking for flowers, and could find none. "But it is not the season," I observed, with a smile. "Oh, there are so many flowers!" he answered, as he came nearer to me. "In my garden there are roses and honeysuckles of two sorts: one sort was given to me by my father; they grow as plentifully as weeds. I have been looking for them these two days, and cannot find them. There are flowers out there, yellow, blue, and red; and that centaury has a very pretty blossom: but I can find none of them." I observed his peculiarity, and therefore asked him, with an air of indifference, what he intended to do with his flowers. A strange smile overspread his countenance. Holding his finger to his mouth, he expressed a hope that I would not betray him; and he then informed me that he had promised to gather a nosegay for his mistress. "That is right," said I. "Oh!" he replied, "she possesses many other things as well; she is very rich." "And yet," I continued, "she likes your nosegays." "Oh, she has jewels and crowns!" he exclaimed. I asked who she was. "If the states-general would but pay me," he added, "I should be quite another man. Alas! there was a time when I was so happy; but that is past, and I am now—" He raised his swimming eyes to heaven. "And you were happy once?" I observed. "Ah,

would I were so still!" was his reply. "I was then as gay and contented as a man can be." An old woman, who was coming towards us, now called out: "Henry, Henry! where are you? We have been looking for you everywhere. Come to dinner." "Is he your son?" I inquired, as I went towards her. "Yes," she said; "he is my poor, unfortunate son. The Lord has sent me a heavy affliction." I asked whether he had been long in this state. She answered: "He has been as calm as he is at present for about six months. I thank Heaven that he has so far recovered. He was for one whole year quite raving, and chained down in a madhouse. Now he injures no one, but talks of nothing else than kings and queens. He used to be a very good, quiet youth, and helped to maintain me; he wrote a very fine hand. But all at once he became melancholy, was seized with a violent fever, grew distracted, and is now as you see. If I were only to tell you, sir—" I interrupted her by asking what period it was in which he boasted of having been so happy. "Poor boy!" she exclaimed, with a smile of compassion, "he means the time when he was completely deranged,—a time he never ceases to regret,—when he was in the madhouse, and unconscious of everything." I was thunderstruck. I placed a piece of money in her hand, and hastened away.

"You were happy!" I exclaimed, as I returned quickly to the town, "'as gay and contented as a man can be!'" God of heaven! and is this the destiny of man? Is he only happy before he has acquired his reason or after he has lost it? Unfortunate being! And yet I envy your fate; I envy the delusion to which you are a victim. You go forth with joy to gather flowers for your princess in winter, and grieve when you can find none, and cannot understand why they do not grow. But I wander forth without joy, without hope, without design; and I return as I came. You fancy what a man you would be if the states-general paid you. Happy mortal, who can ascribe your wretchedness to an earthly cause! You do not know, you do not feel, that in your own distracted heart and disordered brain dwells the source of that unhappiness which all the potentates on earth cannot relieve.

Let that man die unconsoled who can deride the invalid for undertaking a journey to distant, healthful springs,—where

he often finds only a heavier disease and a more painful death,—or who can exult over the despairing mind of a sinner who, to obtain peace of conscience and an alleviation of misery, makes a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Each laborious step which galls his wounded feet in rough and untrodden paths pours a drop of balm into his troubled soul, and the journey of many a weary day brings a nightly relief to his anguished heart.

Will you dare call this enthusiasm, ye crowd of pompous declaimers? Enthusiasm? O God! thou seest my tears. Thou hast allotted us our portion of misery; must we also have brethren to persecute us, to deprive us of our consolation, of our trust in thee and in thy love and mercy? For our trust in the virtue of the healing root or in the strength of the vine,—what is it else than a belief in thee, from whom all that surrounds us derives its healing and restoring powers. Father, whom I know not,—who wert once wont to fill my soul, but who now hidest thy face from me,—call me back to thee; be silent no longer! Thy silence shall not delay a soul which thirsts after thee. What man, what father, could be angry with a son for returning to him suddenly, for falling on his neck, and exclaiming, "I am here again, my father! Forgive me if I have anticipated my journey, and returned before the appointed time! The world is everywhere the same,—a scene of labour and pain, of pleasure and reward; but what does it all avail? I am happy only where thou art, and in thy presence am I content to suffer or enjoy." And wouldst thou, Heavenly Father, banish such a child from thy presence?

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I implore your attention. It is all over with me. I can support this state no longer. To-day I was sitting by Charlotte. She was playing upon her piano a succession of delightful melodies, with such intense expression! Her little sister was dressing her doll upon my lap. The tears came into my eyes. I leaned down, and looked intently at her wedding-ring; my tears fell—immediately she began to play that favourite, that divine air which has so often enchanted me. I felt comfort from a recollection of the past, of those bygone days when that air was familiar to me; and then I recalled all the sorrows and the disappointments which I had since endured. I paced with hasty strides through the room, my heart became convulsed with painful emotions. At length I went up to her, and exclaimed with eagerness, "For Heaven's sake, play that air no longer!" She stopped, and looked steadfastly at me. She then said, with a smile which sunk deep into my heart: "Werther, you are ill; your dearest food is distasteful to you. But go, I entreat you, and endeavour to compose yourself." I tore myself away. God, thou seest my torments, and wilt end them!

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How her image haunts me! Waking or asleep, she fills my entire soul! Soon as I close my eyes, here, in my brain, where all the nerves of vision are concentrated, her dark eyes are imprinted. Here—I do not know how to describe it; but if I shut my eyes, hers are immediately before me: dark as an abyss they open upon me, and absorb my senses.

And what is man,—that boasted demigod? Do not his powers fail when he most requires their use? And whether he soar in joy or sink in sorrow, is not his career in both inevitably arrested? And whilst he fondly dreams that he is grasping at infinity, does he not feel compelled to return to a consciousness of his cold, monotonous existence?

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IT is a matter of extreme regret that we want original evidence of the last remarkable days of our friend; and we are, therefore, obliged to interrupt the progress of his correspondence, and to supply the deficiency by a connected narration.

I have felt it my duty to collect accurate information from the mouths of persons well acquainted with his history. The story is simple; and all the accounts agree, except in some unimportant particulars. It is true that, with respect to the characters of the persons spoken of, opinions and judgments vary.

We have only, then, to relate conscientiously the facts which our diligent labour has enabled us to collect, to give the letters of the deceased, and to pay particular attention to the slightest fragment from his pen, more especially as it is so difficult to discover the real and correct motives of men who are not of the common order.

Sorrow and discontent had taken deep root in Werther's soul, and gradually imparted their character to his whole being. The harmony of his mind became completely disturbed; a perpetual excitement and mental irritation, which weakened his natural powers, produced the saddest effects upon him, and rendered him at length the victim of an exhaustion against which he struggled with still more painful efforts than he had displayed, even in contending with his other misfortunes. His mental anxiety weakened his various good qualities; and he was soon converted into a gloomy companion,—always unhappy and unjust in his ideas, the more wretched he became. This was, at least, the opinion of Albert's friends. They assert, moreover, that the character of Albert himself had undergone no change in the meantime; he was still the same being whom Werther had loved, honoured, and respected from the commencement.

His love for Charlotte was unbounded; he was proud of her, and desired that she should be recognised by every one as the noblest of created beings. Was he, however, to blame for wishing to avert from her every appearance of suspicion? or for his unwillingness to share his rich prize with another, even for a moment, and in the most innocent manner? It is asserted that Albert frequently retired from his wife's apartment during Werther's visits; but this did not arise from hatred or aversion to his friend, but only from a feeling that his presence was oppressive to Werther.

Charlotte's father, who was confined to the house by indisposition, was accustomed to send his carriage for her, that she might make excursions in the neighbourhood. One day the weather had been unusually severe, and the whole country was covered with snow.

Werther went for Charlotte the following morning, in order that, if Albert were absent, he might conduct her home.

The beautiful weather produced but little impression on his troubled spirit. A heavy weight lay upon his soul, deep melancholy had taken possession of him, and his mind knew no change save from one painful thought to another.

As he now never enjoyed internal peace, the condition of his fellow-creatures was to him a perpetual source of trouble and distress. He believed he had disturbed the happiness of Albert and his wife; and whilst he censured himself strongly for this, he began to entertain a secret dislike to Albert.

His thoughts were occasionally directed to this point. "Yes," he would repeat to himself, with ill-concealed dissatisfaction,—"yes, this is, after all, the extent of that confiding, dear, tender, and sympathetic love, that calm and eternal fidelity! What do I behold but satiety and indifference? Does not every frivolous engagement attract him more than his charming and lovely wife? Does he know how to prize his happiness? Can he value her as she deserves? He possesses her, it is true,—I know that, as I know much more,—and I have become accustomed to the thought that he will drive me mad, or, perhaps, murder me. Is his friendship towards me unimpaired? Does he not view my attachment to Charlotte as an infringement upon his rights, and consider my attention to her as a silent rebuke to himself? I know,

and indeed feel, that he dislikes me,—that he wishes for my absence,—that my presence is hateful to him."

He would often pause when on his way to visit Charlotte, stand still as though in doubt, and seem desirous of returning, but would nevertheless proceed; and, engaged in such thoughts and soliloquies as we have described, he finally reached the hunting-lodge, with a sort of involuntary consent.

Upon one occasion he entered the house; and, inquiring for Charlotte, he observed that the inmates were in a state of unusual confusion. The eldest boy informed him that a dreadful misfortune had occurred at Walheim,—that a peasant had been murdered! But this made little impression upon him. Entering the apartment, he found Charlotte engaged reasoning with her father, who, in spite of his infirmity, insisted on going to the scene of the crime, in order to institute an inquiry. The criminal was unknown; the victim had been found dead at his own door that morning. Suspicions were excited; the murdered man had been in the service of a widow, and the person who had previously filled the situation had been dismissed from her employment.

As soon as Werther heard this, he exclaimed with great excitement, "Is it possible! I must go to the spot,—I cannot delay a moment!" He hastened to Walheim. Every incident returned vividly to his remembrance; and he entertained not the slightest doubt that that man was the murderer to whom he had so often spoken, and for whom he entertained so much regard. His way took him past the well-known lime-trees, to the house where the body had been carried; and his feelings were greatly excited at the sight of the fondly recollected spot. That threshold where the neighbours' children had so often played together was stained with blood; love and attachment, the noblest feelings of human nature, had been converted into violence and murder. The huge trees stood there leafless and covered with hoar-frost; the beautiful hedgerows which surrounded the old churchyard wall were withered; and the gravestones, half covered with snow, were visible through the openings.

As he approached the inn, in front of which the whole

village was assembled, screams were suddenly heard. A troop of armed peasants was seen approaching, and every one exclaimed that the criminal had been apprehended. Werther looked, and was not long in doubt. The prisoner was no other than the servant, who had been formerly so attached to the widow, and whom he had met prowling about, with that suppressed anger and ill-concealed despair which we have before described.

"What have you done, unfortunate man?" inquired Werther, as he advanced towards the prisoner. The latter turned his eyes upon him in silence, and then replied with perfect composure, "No one will now marry her, and she will marry no one." The prisoner was taken in the inn, and Werther left the place.

The mind of Werther was fearfully excited by this shocking occurrence. He ceased, however, to be oppressed by his usual feeling of melancholy, moroseness, and indifference to everything that passed around him. He entertained a strong degree of pity for the prisoner, and was seized with an indescribable anxiety to save him from his impending fate. He considered him so unfortunate, he deemed his crime so excusable, and thought his own condition so nearly similar, that he felt convinced he could make every one else view the matter in the light in which he saw it himself. He now became anxious to undertake his defence, and commenced composing an eloquent speech for the occasion; and, on his way to the hunting-lodge, he could not refrain from speaking aloud the statement which he resolved to make to the judge.

Upon his arrival, he found Albert had been before him: and he was a little perplexed by this meeting; but he soon recovered himself, and expressed his opinion with much warmth to the judge. The latter shook his head doubtingly; and although Werther urged his case with the utmost zeal, feeling, and determination in defence of his client, yet, as we may easily suppose, the judge was not much influenced by his appeal. On the contrary, he interrupted him in his address, reasoned with him seriously, and even administered a rebuke to him for becoming the advocate of a murderer. He demonstrated that, according to this precedent, every

law might be violated, and the public security utterly destroyed. He added, moreover, that in such a case he could himself do nothing, without incurring the greatest responsibility; that everything must follow in the usual course, and pursue the ordinary channel.

Werther, however, did not abandon his enterprise, and even besought the judge to connive at the flight of the prisoner. But this proposal was peremptorily rejected. Albert, who had taken some part in the discussion, coincided in opinion with the judge. At this Werther became enraged, and took his leave in great anger, after the judge had more than once assured him that the prisoner could not be saved.

The excess of his grief at this assurance may be inferred from a note we have found amongst his papers, and which was doubtless written upon this very occasion.

"You cannot be saved, unfortunate man! I see clearly that we cannot be saved!"

Werther was highly incensed at the observations which Albert had made to the judge in this matter of the prisoner. He thought he could detect therein a little bitterness towards himself personally; and although, upon reflection, it could not escape his sound judgment that their view of the matter was correct, he felt the greatest possible reluctance to make such an admission.

A memorandum of Werther's upon this point, expressive of his general feelings towards Albert, has been found amongst his papers.

"What is the use of my continually repeating that he is a good and estimable man? He is an inward torment to me, and I am incapable of being just towards him."

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The vain attempt Werther had made to save the unhappy murderer was the last feeble glimmering of a flame about to be extinguished. He sank almost immediately afterwards into a state of gloom and inactivity, until he was at length brought to perfect distraction by learning that he was to be summoned as a witness against the prisoner, who asserted his complete innocence.

His mind now became oppressed by the recollection of every misfortune of his past life. The mortification he had suffered at the ambassador's, and his subsequent troubles, were revived in his memory. He became utterly inactive. Destitute of energy, he was cut off from every pursuit and occupation which compose the business of common life; and he became a victim to his own susceptibility, and to his restless passion for the most amiable and beloved of women, whose peace he destroyed. In this unvarying monotony of existence his days were consumed; and his powers became exhausted without aim or design, until they brought him to a sorrowful end.

A few letters which he left behind, and which we here subjoin, afford the best proofs of his anxiety of mind and of the depth of his passion, as well as of his doubts and struggles, and of his weariness of life.

DEC. 12.

Dear Wilhelm, I am reduced to the condition of those unfortunate wretches who believe they are pursued by an evil spirit. Sometimes I am oppressed, not by apprehension or fear, but by an inexpressible internal sensation, which weighs upon my heart, and impedes my breath! Then I wander forth at night, even in this tempestuous season, and feel pleasure in surveying the dreadful scenes around me.

Yesterday evening I went forth. A rapid thaw had suddenly set in: I had been informed that the river had risen, that the brooks had all overflowed their banks, and that the whole vale of Walheim was under water! Upon the stroke of twelve I hastened forth. I

he often finds only a heavier disease and a more painful death,—or who can exult over the despairing mind of a sinner who, to obtain peace of conscience and an alleviation of misery, makes a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Each laborious step which galls his wounded feet in rough and untrodden paths pours a drop of balm into his troubled soul, and the journey of many a weary day brings a nightly relief to his anguished heart.

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account," he added; "and I request you will compel him to alter his deportment towards you, and to visit you less frequently. The world is censorious, and I know that here and there we are spoken of." Charlotte made no reply, and Albert seemed to feel her silence. At least, from that time, he never again spoke of Werther; and when she introduced the subject, he allowed the conversation to die away, or else he directed the discourse into another channel.

The vain attempt Werther had made to save the unhappy murderer was the last feeble glimmering of a flame about to be extinguished. He sank almost immediately afterwards into a state of gloom and inactivity, until he was at length brought to perfect distraction by learning that he was to be summoned as a witness against the prisoner, who asserted his complete innocence.

His mind now became oppressed by the recollection of every misfortune of his past life. The mortification he had suffered at the ambassador's, and his subsequent troubles, were revived in his memory. He became utterly inactive. Destitute of energy, he was cut off from every pursuit and occupation which compose the business of common life; and he became a victim to his own susceptibility, and to his restless passion for the most amiable and beloved of women, whose peace he destroyed. In this unvarying monotony of existence his days were consumed; and his powers became exhausted without aim or design, until they brought him to a sorrowful end.

A few letters which he left behind, and which we here subjoin, afford the best proofs of his anxiety of mind and of the depth of his passion, as well as of his doubts and struggles, and of his weariness of life.

DEC. 12.

Dear Wilhelm, I am reduced to the condition of those unfortunate wretches who believe they are pursued by an evil spirit. Sometimes I am oppressed, not by apprehension or fear, but by an inexpressible internal sensation, which weighs upon my heart, and impedes my breath! Then I wander forth at night, even in this tempestuous season, and feel pleasure in surveying the dreadful scenes around me.

Yesterday evening I went forth. A rapid thaw had suddenly set in: I had been informed that the river had risen, that the brooks had all overflowed their banks, and that the whole vale of Walheim was under water! Upon the stroke of twelve I hastened forth. I

beheld a fearful sight. The foaming torrents rolled from the mountains in the moonlight,—fields and meadows, trees and hedges, were confounded together; and the entire valley was converted into a deep lake, which was agitated by the roaring wind! And when the moon shone forth, and tinged the black clouds with silver, and the impetuous torrent at my feet foamed and resounded with awful and grand impetuosity, I was overcome by a mingled sensation of apprehension and delight. With extended arms I looked down into the yawning abyss, and cried, "Plunge!" For a moment my senses forsook me, in the intense delight of ending my sorrows and my sufferings by a plunge into that gulf! And then I felt as if I were rooted to the earth, and incapable of seeking an end to my woes! But my hour is not yet come; I feel it is not. Oh, Wilhelm, how willingly could I abandon my existence to ride the whirlwind, or to embrace the torrent! and then might not rapture perchance be the portion of this liberated soul?

I turned my sorrowful eyes towards a favourite spot, where I was accustomed to sit with Charlotte beneath a willow after a fatiguing walk. Alas! it was covered with water, and with difficulty I found even the meadow. And the fields around the hunting-lodge, thought I. Has our dear bower been destroyed by this unpitying storm? And a beam of past happiness streamed upon me, as the mind of a captive is illumined by dreams of flocks and herds and bygone joys of home! But I am free from blame. I have courage to die! Perhaps I have,—but I still sit here, like a wretched pauper, who collects fagots, and begs her bread from door to door, that she may prolong for a few days a miserable existence which she is unwilling to resign.

DEC. 15.

What is the matter with me, dear Wilhelm? I am afraid of myself! Is not my love for her of the purest, most holy, and most brotherly nature? Has my soul ever been sullied by a single sensual desire? But I will make no protestations. And now, ye nightly visions, how truly have those mortals understood you, who ascribe your various contradictory effects to some invincible power! This night—I tremble at the avowal—I held her in my arms, locked in a close embrace: I pressed her to my bosom, and covered with countless kisses those dear lips which murmured in reply soft protestations of love. My sight became confused by the delicious intoxication of her eyes. Heavens! is it sinful to revel again in such happiness, to recall once more those rapturous moments with intense delight? Charlotte! Charlotte! I am lost! My senses are bewildered, my recollection is confused, mine eyes are bathed in tears—I am ill; and yet I am well—I wish for nothing—I have no desires—it were better I were gone.

Under the circumstances narrated above, a determination to quit this world had now taken fixed possession of

Werther's soul. Since Charlotte's return, this thought had been the final object of all his hopes and wishes; but he had resolved that such a step should not be taken with precipitation, but with calmness and tranquillity, and with the most perfect deliberation.

His troubles and internal struggles may be understood from the following fragment, which was found, without any date, amongst his papers, and appears to have formed the beginning of a letter to Wilhelm:

"Her presence, her fate, her sympathy for me, have power still to extract tears from my withered brain.

"One lifts up the curtain, and passes to the other side,—that is all! And why all these doubts and delays? Because we know not what is behind,—because there is no returning,—and because our mind infers that all is darkness and confusion, where we have nothing but uncertainty."

His appearance at length became quite altered by the effect of his melancholy thoughts; and his resolution was now finally and irrevocably taken, of which the following ambiguous letter which he addressed to his friend, may appear to afford some proof:—

DEC. 20.

I am grateful to your love, Wilhelm, for having repeated your advice so seasonably. Yes, you are right: it is undoubtedly better that I should depart. But I do not entirely approve your scheme of returning at once to your neighbourhood; at least, I should like to make a little excursion on the way, particularly as we may now expect a continued frost, and consequently good roads. I am much pleased with your intention of coming to fetch me; only delay your journey for a fortnight, and wait for another letter from me. One should gather nothing before it is ripe, and a fortnight sooner or later makes a great difference. Entreat my mother to pray for her son, and tell her I beg her pardon for all the unhappiness I have occasioned her. It has ever been my fate to give pain to those whose happiness I should have promoted. Adieu, my dearest friend. May every blessing of heaven attend you! Farewell.

We find it difficult to express the emotions with which Charlotte's soul was agitated during the whole of this time, whether in relation to her husband or to her unfortunate friend; although we are enabled, by our knowledge of her character, to understand their nature.

It is certain that she had formed a determination by every means in her power to keep Werther at a distance; and if she hesitated in her decision, it was from a sincere feeling of friendly pity, knowing how much it would cost him,—indeed, that he would find it almost impossible to comply with her wishes. But various causes now urged her to be firm. Her husband preserved a strict silence about the whole matter; and she never made it a subject of conversation, feeling bound to prove to him by her conduct that her sentiments agreed with his.

The same day, which was the Sunday before Christmas, after Werther had written the last-mentioned letter to his friend, he came in the evening to Charlotte's house, and found her alone. She was busy preparing some little gifts for her brothers and sisters, which were to be distributed to them on Christmas Day. He began talking of the delight of the children, and of that age when the sudden appearance of the Christmas-tree, decorated with fruit and sweetmeats, and lighted up with wax candles, causes such transports of joy. "You shall have a gift, too, if you behave well," said Charlotte, hiding her embarrassment under a sweet smile. "And what do you call behaving well? What should I do, what can I do, my dear Charlotte?" said he. "Thursday night," she answered, "is Christmas Eve. The children are all to be here, and my father too: there is a present for each; do you come likewise, but do not come before that time." Werther started. "I desire you will not: it must be so," she continued. "I ask it of you as a favour, for my own peace and tranquillity. We cannot go on in this manner any longer." He turned away his face, walked hastily up and down the room, muttering indistinctly, "We cannot go on in this manner any longer!" Charlotte, seeing the violent agitation into which these words had thrown him, endeavoured to divert his thoughts by different questions, but in vain. "No, Charlotte!" he exclaimed; "I will never see you any more!" "And why so?" she answered. "We may—we must see each other again; only let it be with more discretion. Oh! why were you born with that excessive, that ungovernable passion for everything that is dear to you?" Then, taking his hand, she said: "I entreat of you to be

more calm: your talents, your understanding, your genius, will furnish you with a thousand resources. Be a man, and conquer an unhappy attachment towards a creature who can do nothing but pity you." He bit his lips, and looked at her with a gloomy countenance. She continued to hold his hand. "Grant me but a moment's patience, Werther," she said. "Do you not see that you are deceiving yourself, that you are seeking your own destruction? Why must you love me, me only, who belong to another? I fear, I much fear, that it is only the impossibility of possessing me which makes your desire for me so strong." He drew back his hand, whilst he surveyed her with a wild and angry look. "'Tis well!" he exclaimed, "'tis very well! Did not Albert furnish you with this reflection? It is profound, a very profound remark." "A reflection that any one might easily make," she answered; "and is there not a woman in the whole world who is at liberty, and has the power to make you happy? Conquer yourself: look for such a being, and believe me when I say that you will certainly find her. I have long felt for you, and for us all: you have confined yourself too long within the limits of too narrow a circle. Conquer yourself; make an effort: a short journey will be of service to you. Seek and find an object worthy of your love; then return hither and let us enjoy together all the happiness of the most perfect friendship."

"This speech," replied Werther, with a cold smile,—"this speech should be printed, for the benefit of all teachers. My dear Charlotte, allow me but a short time longer, and all will be well." "But, however, Werther," she added, "do not come again before Christmas." He was about to make some answer, when Albert came in. They saluted each other coldly, and with mutual embarrassment paced up and down the room. Werther made some common remarks; Albert did the same, and their conversation soon dropped. Albert asked his wife about some household matters; and, finding that his commissions were not executed, he used some expressions which, to Werther's ear, savoured of extreme harshness. He wished to go, but had not power to move; and in this situation he remained till eight o'clock, his uneasiness and discontent continually increasing. At

length the cloth was laid for supper, and he took up his hat and stick. Albert invited him to remain; but Werther, fancying that he was merely paying a formal compliment, thanked him coldly and left the house.

Werther returned home, took the candle from his servant, and retired to his room alone. He talked for some time with great earnestness to himself, wept aloud, walked in a state of great excitement through his chamber; till at length, without undressing, he threw himself on the bed, where he was found by his servant at eleven o'clock, when the latter ventured to enter the room and take off his boots. Werther did not prevent him, but forbade him to come in the morning till he should ring.

On Monday morning, the 21st of December, he wrote to Charlotte the following letter, which was found, sealed, on his bureau after his death, and was given to her. I shall insert it in fragments; as it appears, from several circumstances, to have been written in that manner.

"It is all over, Charlotte: I am resolved to die! I make this declaration deliberately and coolly, without any romantic passion, on this morning of the day when I am to see you for the last time. At the moment you read these lines, O best of women, the cold grave will hold the inanimate remains of that restless and unhappy being who in the last moments of his existence knew no pleasure so great as that of conversing with you! I have passed a dreadful night,—or rather, let me say, a propitious one; for it has given me resolution, it has fixed my purpose. I am resolved to die. When I tore myself from you yesterday, my senses were in tumult and disorder; my heart was oppressed, hope and pleasure had fled from me forever, and a petrifying cold had seized my wretched being. I could scarcely reach my room. I threw myself on my knees, and Heaven, for the last time, granted me the consolation of shedding tears. A thousand ideas, a thousand schemes, arose within my soul; till at length one last, fixed, final thought took possession of my heart. It was to die. I lay down to rest; and in the morning, in the quiet hour of awakening, the same determination was upon me. To die! It is not despair: it is conviction that I have filled up the measure of my sufferings, that I have reached my appointed term, and must sacrifice myself for thee. Yes, Charlotte, why should I not avow it? One of us three must die: it shall be Werther. O beloved Charlotte! this heart, excited by rage and fury, has often conceived the horrid idea of murdering your husband—you—myself! The lot is cast at length. And in the bright, quiet evenings of summer, when you sometimes wander towards the moun-

tains, let your thoughts then turn to me: recollect how often you have watched me coming to meet you from the valley; then bend your eyes upon the churchyard which contains my grave, and, by the light of the setting sun, mark how the evening breeze waves the tall grass which grows above my tomb. I was calm when I began this letter, but the recollection of these scenes makes me weep like a child."

About ten in the morning, Werther called his servant, and, whilst he was dressing told him that in a few days he intended to set out upon a journey, and bade him therefore lay his clothes in order, and prepare them for packing up, call in all his accounts, fetch home the books he had lent, and give two months' pay to the poor dependants who were accustomed to receive from him a weekly allowance.

He breakfasted in his room, and then mounted his horse, and went to visit the steward, who, however, was not at home. He walked pensively in the garden, and seemed anxious to renew all the ideas that were most painful to him.

The children did not suffer him to remain alone long. They followed him, skipping and dancing before him, and told him that after to-morrow—and to-morrow—and one day more, they were to receive their Christmas gift from Charlotte; and they then recounted all the wonders of which they had formed ideas in their child imaginations. "To-morrow—and to-morrow," said he, "and one day more!" And he kissed them tenderly. He was going; but the younger boy stopped him, to whisper something in his ear. He told him that his elder brothers had written splendid New Year's wishes—so large!—one for papa, and another for Albert and Charlotte, and one for Werther; and they were to be presented early in the morning, on New-Year's Day. This quite overcame him. He made each of the children a present, mounted his horse, left his compliments for papa and mama, and, with tears in his eyes, rode away from the place.

He returned home about five o'clock, ordered his servant to keep up his fire, desired him to pack his books and linen at the bottom of the trunk, and to place his coats at the top. He then appears to have made the following addition to the letter addressed to Charlotte.—

"You do not expect me. You think I will obey you, and not visit you again till Christmas Eve. Oh, Charlotte, to-day or never! On Christmas Eve you will hold this paper in your hand; you will tremble, and moisten it with your tears. I will—I must! Oh, how happy I feel to be determined!"

In the mean time Charlotte was in a pitiable state of mind. After her last conversation with Werther, she found how painful to herself it would be to decline his visits, and knew how severely he would suffer from their separation.

She had, in conversation with Albert, mentioned casually that Werther would not return before Christmas Eve; and soon afterwards Albert went on horseback to see a person in the neighbourhood, with whom he had to transact some business which would detain him all night.

Charlotte was sitting alone. None of her family were near, and she gave herself up to the reflections that silently took possession of her mind. She was forever united to a husband whose love and fidelity she had proved, to whom she was heartily devoted, and who seemed to be a special gift from Heaven to insure her happiness. On the other hand, Werther had become dear to her. There was a cordial unanimity of sentiment between them from the very first hour of their acquaintance, and their long association and repeated interviews had made an indelible impression upon her heart. She had been accustomed to communicate to him every thought and feeling which interested her, and his absence threatened to open a void in her existence which it might be impossible to fill. How heartily she wished that she might change him into her brother,—that she could induce him to marry one of her own friends, or could re-establish his intimacy with Albert.

She passed all her intimate friends in review before her mind, but found something objectionable in each, and could decide upon none to whom she would consent to give him.

Amid all these considerations she felt deeply but indistinctly that her own real but unexpressed wish was to retain him for herself, and her pure and amiable heart felt from this thought a sense of oppression which seemed to forbid a prospect of happiness. She was wretched: a dark cloud obscured her mental vision.

It was now half-past six o'clock, and she heard Werther's step on the stairs. She at once recognised his voice, as he inquired if she were at home. Her heart beat audibly—we could almost say for the first time—at his arrival. It was too late to deny herself; and as he entered, she exclaimed, with a sort of ill-concealed confusion, "You have not kept your word!" "I promised nothing," he answered. "But you should have complied, at least for my sake," she continued. "I implore you, for both our sakes."

She scarcely knew what she said or did, and sent for some friends, who by their presence might prevent her being left alone with Werther. He put down some books he had brought with him, then made inquiries about some others, until she began to hope that her friends might arrive shortly, entertaining at the same time a desire that they might stay away.

At one moment she felt anxious that the servant should remain in the adjoining room, then she changed her mind. Werther, meanwhile, walked impatiently up and down. She went to the piano, and determined not to retire. She then collected her thoughts, and sat down quietly at Werther's side, who had taken his usual place on the sofa.

"Have you brought nothing to read?" she inquired. He had nothing. "There in my drawer," she continued, "you will find your own translation of some of the songs of Ossian. I have not yet read them, as I have still hoped to hear you recite them; but, for some time past, I have not been able to accomplish such a wish." He smiled, and went for the manuscript, which he took with a shudder. He sat down: and, with eyes full of tears, he began to read.

"Star of descending night! fair is thy light in the west! thou liftest thy unshorn head from thy cloud; thy steps are stately on thy hill. What dost thou behold in the plain? The stormy winds are laid. The murmur of the torrent comes from afar. Roaring waves climb the distant rock. The flies of evening are on their feeble wings: the hum of their course is on the field. What dost thou behold, fair light? But thou dost smile and depart. The waves come with joy around thee: they bathe thy lovely hair. Farewell, thou silent beam! Let the light of Ossian's soul arise!

"And it does arise in its strength! I behold my departed friends. Their gathering is on Lora, as in the days of other years. Fingal

comes like a watery column of mist! his heroes are around; and see the bards of song,—gray-haired Ullin! stately Ryno! Alpin with the tuneful voice! the soft complaint of Minona! How are ye changed, my friends, since the days of Selma's feast, when we contended, like gales of spring as they fly along the hill, and bend by turns the feebly whistling grass!

"Minona came forth in her beauty, with downcast look and tearful eye. Her hair was flying slowly with the blast that rushed unfrequent from the hill. The souls of the heroes were sad when she raised the tuneful voice. Oft had they seen the grave of Salgar, the dark dwelling of white-bosomed Colma. Colma left alone on the hill with all her voice of song! Salgar promised to come; but the night descended around. Hear the voice of Colma, when she sat alone on the hill!

"*Colma.* It is night: I am alone, forlorn on the hill of storms. The wind is heard on the mountain. The torrent is howling down the rock. No hut receives me from the rain: forlorn on the hill of winds!

"Rise, moon, from behind thy clouds! Stars of the night, arise! Lead me, some light, to the place where my love rests from the chase alone! His bow near him unstrung, his dogs panting around him! But here I must sit alone by the rock of the mossy stream. The stream and the wind roar aloud. I hear not the voice of my love! Why delays my Salgar; why the chief of the hill his promise? Here is the rock, and here the tree; here is the roaring stream! Thou didst promise with night to be here. Ah! whither is my Salgar gone? With thee I would fly from my father, with thee from my brother of pride. Our race have long been foes: we are not foes, O Salgar!

"Cease a little while, O winds! stream, be thou silent awhile! Let my voice be heard around; let my wanderer hear me! Salgar! it is Colma who calls. Here is the tree and the rock. Salgar, my love, I am here! Why delayest thou thy coming? Lo! the calm moon comes forth. The flood is bright in the vale; the rocks are gray on the steep. I see him not on the brow. His dogs come not before him with tidings of his near approach. Here I must sit alone!

"Who lie on the heath beside me? Are they my love and my brother? Speak to me, O my friends! To Colma they give no reply. Speak to me: I am alone! My soul is tormented with fears. Ah, they are dead! Their swords are red from the fight. Oh, my brother! my brother! why hast thou slain my Salgar? Why, O Salgar! hast thou slain my brother? Dear were ye both to me! what shall I say in your praise? Thou wert fair on the hill among thousands! he was terrible in fight! Speak to me! hear my voice! hear me, sons of my love! They are silent, silent forever! Cold, cold, are their breasts of clay! Oh, from the rock on the hill, from the top of the windy steep, speak, ye ghosts of the dead! Speak, I will not be afraid! Whither are ye gone to rest? In what cave of the hill shall I find the departed? No feeble voice is on the gale: no answer half drowned in the storm!

"I sit in my grief: I wait for morning in my tears! Rear the tomb, ye friends of the dead. Close it not till Colma come. My life flies away like a dream. Why should I stay behind? Here shall I rest with my friends, by the stream of the sounding rock. When night comes on the hill,—when the loud winds arise, my ghost shall stand in the blast, and mourn the death of my friends. The hunter shall hear from his booth; he shall fear, but love my voice! For sweet shall my voice be for my friends: pleasant were her friends to Colma.

"Such was thy song, Minona, softly blushing daughter of Torman. Our tears descended for Colma, and our souls were sad! Ullin came with his harp; he gave the song of Alpin. The voice of Alpin was pleasant; the soul of Ryno was a beam of fire! But they had rested in the narrow house: their voice had ceased in Selma! Ullin had returned one day from the chase before the heroes fell. He heard their strife on the hill: their song was soft, but sad! They mourned the fall of Morar, first of mortal men! His soul was like the soul of Fingal; his sword like the sword of Oscar. But he fell, and his father mourned; his sister's eyes were full of tears. Minona's eyes were full of tears, the sister of car-borne Morar. She retired from the song of Ullin, like the moon in the west, when she foresees the shower, and hides her fair head in a cloud. I touched the harp with Ullin: the song of mourning rose!

"*Ryno.* The wind and the rain are past; calm is the noon of day. The clouds are divided in heaven. Over the green hills flies the inconstant sun. Red through the stony vale comes down the stream of the hill. Sweet are thy murmurs, O stream! but more sweet is the voice I hear. It is the voice of Alpin, the son of song, mourning for the dead! Bent is his head of age; red his tearful eye. Alpin, thou son of song, why alone on the silent hill? why complainest thou, as a blast in the wood,—as a wave on the lonely shore?

"*Alpin.* My tears, O Ryno! are for the dead,—my voice for those that have passed away. Tall thou art on the hill; fair among the sons of the vale. But thou shalt fall like Morar; the mourner shall sit on thy tomb. The hills shall know thee no more; thy bow shall lie in thy hall unstrung!

"Thou wert swift, O Morar! as a roe on the desert; terrible as a meteor of fire. Thy wrath was as the storm; thy sword in battle as lightning in the field. Thy voice was a stream after rain, like thunder on distant hills. Many fell by thy arm: they were consumed in the flames of thy wrath. But when thou didst return from war, how peaceful was thy brow! Thy face was like the sun after rain, like the moon in the silence of night; calm as the breast of the lake when the loud wind is laid.

"Narrow is thy dwelling now! dark the place of thine abode! With three steps I compass thy grave, O thou who wast so great before! Four stones, with their heads of moss, are the only memorial of thee. A tree with scarce a leaf, long grass which whistles in the wind, mark to the hunter's eye the grave of the mighty Morar. Morar! thou art low indeed. Thou hast no mother to mourn thee,

no maid with her tears of love. Dead is she that brought thee forth. Fallen is the daughter of Morglan.

"Who on his staff is this? Who is this whose head is white with age, whose eyes are red with tears, who quakes at every step? It is thy father, O Morar! the father of no son but thee. He heard of thy fame in war, he heard of foes dispersed. He heard of Morar's renown; why did he not hear of his wound? Weep, thou father of Morar! Weep, but thy son heareth thee not. Deep is the sleep of the dead,—low their pillow of dust. No more shall he hear thy voice,—no more awake at thy call. When shall it be morn in the grave, to bid the slumberer awake? Farewell, thou bravest of men! thou conqueror in the field! but the field shall see thee no more, nor the dark wood be lightened with the splendour of thy steel. Thou hast left no son. The song shall preserve thy name. Future times shall hear of thee,—they shall hear of the fallen Morar!

"The grief of all arose, but most the bursting sigh of Armin. He remembers the death of his son, who fell in the days of his youth. Carmor was near the hero, the chief of the echoing Galmal. Why burst the sigh of Armin? he said. Is there a cause to mourn? The song comes with its music to melt and please the soul. It is like soft mist that, rising from a lake, pours on the silent vale; the green flowers are filled with dew, but the sun returns in his strength, and the mist is gone. Why art thou sad, O Armin, chief of sea-surrounded Gorma?

"Sad I am! nor small is my cause of woe! Carmor, thou hast lost no son; thou hast lost no daughter of beauty. Colgar the valiant lives, and Annira, fairest maid. The boughs of thy house ascend, O Carmor! but Armin is the last of his race. Dark is thy bed, O Daura! deep thy sleep in the tomb! When shalt thou wake with thy songs,—with all thy voice of music?

"Arise, winds of autumn, arise; blow along the heath! Streams of the mountains, roar; roar, tempests in the groves of my oaks! Walk through broken clouds, O moon! show thy pale face at intervals; bring to my mind the night when all my children fell,—when Arindal the mighty fell, when Daura the lovely failed. Daura, my daughter, thou wert fair,—fair as the moon on Fura, white as the driven snow, sweet as the breathing gale. Arindal, thy bow was strong, thy spear was swift on the field, thy look was like mist on the wave, thy shield a red cloud in a storm! Armar, renowned in war, came and sought Daura's love. He was not long refused: fair was the hope of their friends.

"Erath, son of Odgal, repined: his brother had been slain by Armar. He came disguised like a son of the sea: fair was his cliff on the wave, white his locks of age, calm his serious brow. Fairest of women, he said, lovely daughter of Armin! a rock not distant in the sea bears a tree on its side: red shines the fruit afar. There Armar waits for Daura. I come to carry his love! She went,—she called on Armar. Naught answered, but the son of the rock. Armar, my love, my love! why tormentest thou me with fear? Hear,

son of Arnart, hear! it is Daura who calleth thee. Erath, the traitor, fled laughing to the land. She lifted up her voice,—she called for her brother and her father. Arindal! Armin! none to relieve you. Daura.

"Her voice came over the sea. Arindal, my son, descended from the hill, rough in the spoils of the chase. His arrows rattled by his side; his bow was in his hand, five dark-gray dogs attended his steps. He saw fierce Erath on the shore; he seized and bound him to an oak. Thick wind the thongs of the hide around his limbs; he loads the winds with his groans. Arindal ascends the deep in his boat to bring Daura to land. Armar came in his wrath, and let fly the gray-feathered shaft. It sung, it sunk in thy heart, O Arindal, my son! for Erath the traitor thou diest. The oar is stopped at once: he panted on the rock and expired. What is thy grief, O Daura, when round thy feet is poured thy brother's blood? The boat is broken in twain. Armar plunges into the sea to rescue his Daura, or die. Sudden a blast from a hill came over the waves; he sank, and he rose no more.

"Alone, on the sea-beat rock, my daughter was heard to complain; frequent and loud were her cries. What could her father do? All night I stood on the shore: I saw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind; the rain beat hard on the hill. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak; it died away like the evening breeze among the grass of the rocks. Spent with grief, she expired, and left thee, Armin, alone. Gone is my strength in war, fallen my pride among women. When the storms aloft arise, when the north lifts the wave on high, I sit by the sounding shore, and look on the fatal rock.

"Often by the setting moon I see the ghosts of my children; half viewless they walk in mournful conference together."

A torrent of tears which streamed from Charlotte's eyes, and gave relief to her bursting heart, stopped Werther's recitation. He threw down the book, seized her hand, and wept bitterly. Charlotte leaned upon her hand, and buried her face in her handkerchief: the agitation of both was excessive. They felt that their own fate was pictured in the misfortunes of Ossian's heroes,—they felt this together, and their tears redoubled. Werther supported his forehead on Charlotte's arm: she trembled, she wished to be gone; but sorrow and sympathy lay like a leaden weight upon her soul. She recovered herself shortly, and begged Werther, with broken sobs, to leave her,—implored him with the utmost earnestness to comply with her request. He trembled; his heart was ready to burst: then taking up the book again, he recommenced reading, in a voice broken by sobs.

"Why dost thou waken me, O Spring. Thy voice woos me, exclaiming, I refresh thee with heavenly dews; but the time of my decay is approaching, the storm is nigh that shall wither my leaves. To-morrow the traveller shall come,—he shall come, who beheld me in beauty: his eye shall seek me in the field around, but he shall not find me."

The whole force of these words fell upon the unfortunate Werther. Full of despair, he threw himself at Charlotte's feet, seized her hands, and pressed them to his eyes and to his forehead. An apprehension of his fatal project now struck her for the first time. Her senses were bewildered: she held his hands, pressed them to her bosom; and, leaning towards him with emotions of the tenderest pity, her warm cheek touched his. They lost sight of everything. The world disappeared from their eyes. He clasped her in his arms, strained her to his bosom, and covered her trembling lips with passionate kisses. "Werther!" she cried with a faint voice, turning herself away; "Werther!" and, with a feeble hand, she pushed him from her. At length, with the firm voice of virtue, she exclaimed, "Werther!" He resisted not, but, tearing himself from her arms, fell on his knees before her. Charlotte rose, and with disordered grief, in mingled tones of love and resentment, she exclaimed, "It is the last time, Werther! You shall never see me any more!" Then, casting one last, tender look upon her unfortunate lover, she rushed into the adjoining room, and locked the door. Werther held out his arms, but did not dare to detain her. He continued on the ground, with his head resting on the sofa, for half an hour, till he heard a noise which brought him to his senses. The servant entered. He then walked up and down the room; and when he was again left alone, he went to Charlotte's door, and, in a low voice, said, "Charlotte, Charlotte! but one word more, one last adieu!" She returned no answer. He stopped, and listened and entreated; but all was silent. At length he tore himself from the place, crying, "Adieu, Charlotte, adieu forever!"

Werther ran to the gate of the town. The guards, who knew him, let him pass in silence. The night was dark and stormy,—it rained and snowed. He reached his own door about eleven. His servant, although seeing him enter the

house without his hat, did not venture to say anything; and as he undressed his master, he found that his clothes were wet. His hat was afterwards found on the point of a rock overhanging the valley; and it is inconceivable how he could have climbed to the summit on such a dark, tempestuous night without losing his life.

He retired to bed, and slept to a late hour. The next morning his servant, upon being called to bring his coffee, found him writing. He was adding, to Charlotte, what we here annex.

"For the last, last time, I open these eyes. Alas! they will behold the sun no more. It is covered by a thick, impenetrable cloud. Yes, Nature! put on mourning; your child, your friend, your lover, draws near his end! This thought, Charlotte, is without parallel: and yet it seems like a mysterious dream when I repeat—This is my last day! The last! Charlotte, no word can adequately express this thought. The last! To-day I stand erect in all my strength,—to-morrow, cold and stark, I shall lie extended upon the ground. To die! What is death? We do but dream in our discourse upon it. I have seen many human beings die; but, so straitened is our feeble nature, we have no clear conception of the beginning or the end of our existence. At this moment I am my own,—or rather I am thine, thine, my adored!—and the next we are parted, severed —perhaps forever! No, Charlotte, no! How can I, how can you, be annihilated? We exist. What is annihilation? A mere word, an unmeaning sound, that fixes no impression on the mind. Dead, Charlotte! laid in the cold earth, in the dark and narrow grave! I had a friend once who was everything to me in early youth. She died. I followed her hearse; I stood by her grave when the coffin was lowered; and when I heard the creaking of the cords as they were loosened and drawn up, when the first shovelful of earth was thrown in, and the coffin returned a hollow sound, which grew fainter and fainter till all was completely covered over, I threw myself on the ground; my heart was smitten, grieved, shattered, rent—but I neither knew what had happened nor what was to happen to me. Death! the grave! I understand not the words. Forgive, oh, forgive me! Yesterday—ah, that day should have been the last of my life! Thou angel!—for the first—first time in my existence, I felt rapture glow within my inmost soul. She loves, she loves me! Still burns upon my lips the sacred fire they received from thine. New torrents of delight overwhelm my soul. Forgive me, oh, forgive!

"I knew that I was dear to you; I saw it in your first entrancing look, knew it by the first pressure of your hand; but when I was absent from you, when I saw Albert at your side, my doubts and fears returned.

"Do you remember the flowers you sent me, when at that crowded assembly you could neither speak nor extend your hand to me?

Half the night I was on my knees before those flowers, and I regarded them as the pledges of your love; but those impressions grew fainter, and were at length effaced.

"Everything passes away; but a whole eternity could not extinguish the living flame which was yesterday kindled by your lips, and which now burns within me. She loves me! These arms have encircled her waist, these lips have trembled upon hers. She is mine! Yes, Charlotte, you are mine forever!

"And what do they mean by saying Albert is your husband? He may be so for this world; and in this world it is a sin to love you, to wish to tear you from his embrace. Yes, it is a crime; and I suffer the punishment, but I have enjoyed the full delight of my sin. I have inhaled a balm that has revived my soul. From this hour you are mine; yes, Charlotte, you are mine! I go before you. I go to my Father and to your Father. I will pour out my sorrows before him, and he will give me comfort till you arrive. Then will I fly to meet you. I will claim you, and remain in your eternal embrace, in the presence of the Almighty.

"I do not dream, I do not rave. Drawing nearer to the grave, my perceptions become clearer. We shall exist; we shall see each other again; we shall behold your mother; I shall behold her, and expose to her my inmost heart. Your mother—your image!"

About eleven o'clock Werther asked his servant if Albert had returned. He answered, "Yes;" for he had seen him pass on horseback: upon which Werther sent him the following note, unsealed:—

"Be so good as to lend me your pistols for a journey. Adieu."

Charlotte had slept little during the past night. All her apprehensions were realised in a way that she could neither foresee nor avoid. Her blood was boiling in her veins, and a thousand painful sensations rent her pure heart. Was it the ardour of Werther's passionate embraces that she felt within her bosom? Was it anger at his daring? Was it the sad comparison of her present condition with former days of innocence, tranquillity, and self-confidence? How could she approach her husband, and confess a scene which she had no reason to conceal, and which she yet felt, nevertheless, unwilling to avow? They had preserved so long a silence towards each other—and should she be the first to break it by so unexpected a discovery? She feared that the mere statement of Werther's visit would trouble him, and his distress would be heightened by her perfect candour. She

wished that he could see her in her true light, and judge her without prejudice; but was she anxious that he should read her inmost soul? On the other hand, could she deceive a being to whom all her thoughts had ever been exposed as clearly as crystal, and from whom no sentiment had ever been concealed? These reflections made her anxious and thoughtful. Her mind still dwelt on Werther, who was now lost to her, but whom she could not bring herself to resign, and for whom she knew nothing was left but despair if she should be lost to him forever.

A recollection of that mysterious estrangement which had lately subsisted between herself and Albert, and which she could never thoroughly understand, was now beyond measure painful to her. Even the prudent and the good have, before now, hesitated to explain their mutual differences, and have dwelt in silence upon their imaginary grievances, until circumstances have become so entangled that in that critical juncture, when a calm explanation would have saved all parties, an understanding was impossible. And thus if domestic confidence had been earlier established between them, if love and kind forbearance had mutually animated and expanded their hearts, it might not, perhaps, even yet have been too late to save our friend.

But we must not forget one remarkable circumstance. We may observe, from the character of Werther's correspondence, that he had never affected to conceal his anxious desire to quit this world. He had often discussed the subject with Albert; and between the latter and Charlotte it had not unfrequently formed a topic of conversation. Albert was so opposed to the very idea of such an action, that, with a degree of irritation unusual in him, he had more than once given Werther to understand that he doubted the seriousness of his threats, and not only turned them into ridicule, but caused Charlotte to share his feelings of incredulity. Her heart was thus tranquillised when she felt disposed to view the melancholy subject in a serious point of view, though she never communicated to her husband the apprehensions she sometimes experienced.

Albert, upon his return, was received by Charlotte with ill-concealed embarrassment. He was himself out of

humour: his business was unfinished; and he had just discovered that the neighbouring official, with whom he had to deal, was an obstinate and narrow-minded personage. Many things had occurred to irritate him.

He inquired whether anything had happened during his absence, and Charlotte hastily answered that Werther had been there on the evening previously. He then inquired for his letters, and was answered that several packages had been left in his study. He thereon retired, leaving Charlotte alone.

The presence of the being she loved and honoured produced a new impression on her heart. The recollection of his generosity, kindness, and affection had calmed her agitation: a secret impulse prompted her to follow him; she took her work and went to his study, as was often her custom. He was busily employed opening and reading his letters. It seemed as if the contents of some were disagreeable. She asked some questions: he gave short answers, and sat down to write.

Several hours passed in this manner, and Charlotte's feelings became more and more melancholy. She felt the extreme difficulty of explaining to her husband, under any circumstances, the weight that lay upon her heart; and her depression became every moment greater, in proportion as she endeavoured to hide her grief and to conceal her tears.

The arrival of Werther's servant occasioned her the greatest embarrassment. He gave Albert a note, which the latter coldly handed to his wife, saying, at the same time, "Give him the pistols. I wish him a pleasant journey," he added, turning to the servant. These words fell upon Charlotte like a thunder-stroke: she rose from her seat half-fainting, and unconscious of what she did. She walked mechanically towards the wall, took down the pistols with a trembling hand, slowly wiped the dust from them, and would have delayed longer, had not Albert hastened her movements by an impatient look. She then delivered the fatal weapons to the servant, without being able to utter a word. As soon as he had departed, she folded up her work, and retired at once to her room, her heart overcome with the most fearful forebodings. She anticipated some dreadful calamity. She

was at one moment on the point of going to her husband, throwing herself at his feet, and acquainting him with all that had happened on the previous evening, that she might acknowledge her fault, and explain her apprehension; then she saw that such a step would be useless, as she would certainly be unable to induce Albert to visit Werther. Dinner was served; and a kind friend whom she had persuaded to remain assisted to sustain the conversation, which was carried on by a sort of compulsion, till the events of the morning were forgotten.

When the servant brought the pistols to Werther, the latter received them with transports of delight upon hearing that Charlotte had given them to him with her own hand. He ate some bread, drank some wine, sent his servant to dinner, and then sat down to write as follows:

"They have been in your hands—you wiped the dust from them. I kiss them a thousand times—you have touched them. Yes, Heaven favours my design—and you, Charlotte, provide me with the fatal instruments. It was my desire to receive my death from your hands, and my wish is gratified. I have made inquiries of my servant. You trembled when you gave him the pistols, but you bade me no adieu. Wretched, wretched that I am,—not one farewell! How could you shut your heart against me in that hour which makes you mine forever? Oh, Charlotte, ages cannot efface the impression,—I feel you cannot hate the man who so passionately loves you!"

After dinner he called his servant, desired him to finish the packing up, destroyed many papers, and then went out to pay some trifling debts. He soon returned home, then went out again notwithstanding the rain, walked for some time in the count's garden, and afterwards proceeded farther into the country. Towards evening he came back once more, and resumed his writing.

"Wilhelm, I have for the last time beheld the mountains, the forests, and the sky. Farewell! And you, my dearest mother, forgive me! Console her, Wilhelm. God bless you! I have settled all my affairs! Farewell! We shall meet again, and be happier than ever."

"I have requited you badly, Albert; but you will forgive me. I have disturbed the peace of your home. I have sowed distrust between you. Farewell! I will end all this wretchedness. And oh that my death may render you happy! Albert, Albert! make that angel happy, and the blessing of Heaven be upon you!"

He spent the rest of the evening in arranging his papers; he tore and burned a great many; others he sealed up, and directed to Wilhelm. They contained some detached thoughts and maxims, some of which I have perused. At ten o'clock he ordered his fire to be made up, and a bottle of wine to be brought to him. He then dismissed his servant, whose room, as well as the apartments of the rest of the family, was situated in another part of the house. The servant lay down without undressing, that he might be the sooner ready for his journey in the morning, his master having informed him that the post-horses would be at the door before six o'clock.

"Past eleven o'clock! All is silent around me, and my soul is calm. I thank thee, O God, that thou bestowest strength and courage upon me in these last moments! I approach the window, my dearest of friends; and through the clouds, which are at this moment driven rapidly along by the impetuous winds, I behold the stars which illumine the eternal heavens. No, you will not fall, celestial bodies: the hand of the Almighty supports both you and me! I have looked for the last time upon the constellation of the Greater Bear: it is my favourite star; for when I bade you farewell at night, Charlotte, and turned my steps from your door, it always shone upon me. With what rapture have I at times beheld it! How often have I implored it with uplifted hands to witness my felicity! and even still —But what object is there, Charlotte, which fails to summon up your image before me? Do you not surround me on all sides? and have I not, like a child, treasured up every trifle which you have consecrated by your touch?

"Your profile, which was so dear to me, I return to you; and I pray you to preserve it. Thousands of kisses have I imprinted upon it, and a thousand times has it gladdened my heart on departing from and returning to my home.

"I have implored your father to protect my remains. At the corner of the churchyard, looking towards the fields, there are two lime-trees,—there I wish to lie. Your father can, and doubtless will, do thus much for his friend. Implore it of him. But perhaps pious Christians will not choose that their bodies should be buried near the corpse of a poor, unhappy wretch like me. Then let me be laid in some remote valley, or near the highway, where the priest and Levite may bless themselves as they pass by my tomb, whilst the Samaritan will shed a tear for my fate.

"See, Charlotte, I do not shudder to take the cold and fatal cup, from which I shall drink the draught of death. Your hand presents it to me, and I do not tremble. All, all is now concluded: the wishes and the hopes of my existence are fulfilled. With cold, unflinching hand I knock at the brazen portals of Death.

"Oh that I had enjoyed the bliss of dying for you! how gladly would I have sacrificed myself for you, Charlotte! And could I but restore peace and joy to your bosom, with what resolution, with what joy, would I not meet my fate! But it is the lot of only a chosen few to shed their blood for their friends, and by their death to augment a thousand times the happiness of those by whom they are beloved.

"I wish, Charlotte, to be buried in the dress I wear at present: it has been rendered sacred by your touch. I have begged this favour of your father. My spirit soars above my sepulchre. I do not wish my pockets to be searched. The knot of pink ribbon which you wore on your bosom the first time I saw you, surrounded by the children—Oh, kiss them a thousand times for me, and tell them the fate of their unhappy friend! I think I see them playing around me. The dear children! How warmly have I been attached to you, Charlotte! Since the first hour I saw you, how impossible have I found it to leave you! This ribbon must be buried with me: it was a present from you on my birthday. How confused it all appears! Little did I then think that I should journey this road! But peace! I pray you, peace!

"They are loaded—the clock strikes twelve. I say amen. Charlotte, Charlotte! farewell, farewell!"

A neighbor saw the flash, and heard the report of the pistol; but as everything remained quiet, he thought no more of it.

In the morning, at six o'clock, the servant went into Werther's room with a candle. He found his master stretched upon the floor, weltering in his blood, and the pistols at his side. He called, he took him in his arms, but received no answer. Life was not yet quite extinct. The servant ran for a surgeon, and then went to fetch Albert. Charlotte heard the ringing of the bell; a cold shudder seized her. She wakened her husband and they both rose. The servant, bathed in tears, faltered forth the dreadful news. Charlotte fell senseless at Albert's feet.

When the surgeon came to the unfortunate Werther, he was still lying on the floor; and his pulse beat, but his limbs were cold. The bullet, entering the forehead over the right eye, had penetrated the skull. A vein was opened in his right arm; the blood came, and he still continued to breathe.

From the blood which flowed from the chair, it could be inferred that he had committed the rash act sitting at his bureau, and that he afterwards fell upon the floor. He was

and lying on his back near the window. He was in full-dress costume.

The house, the neighbourhood, and the whole town were immediately in commotion. Albert arrived. They had laid Werther on the bed: his head was bound up, and the paleness of death was upon his face. His limbs were motionless; but he still breathed, at one time strongly, then weaker—his death was momently expected.

He had drunk only one glass of the wine. Emilia Galotti lay open upon his bureau.

I shall say nothing of Albert's distress, or of Charlotte's grief.

The old steward hastened to the house immediately upon hearing the news: he embraced his dying friend amid a flood of tears. His eldest boys soon followed him on foot. In speechless sorrow they threw themselves on their knees by the bedside, and kissed his hands and face. The eldest, who was his favourite, hung over him till he expired; and even then he was removed by force. At twelve o'clock Werther breathed his last. The presence of the steward, and the precautions he had adopted, prevented a disturbance; and that night, at the hour of eleven, he caused the body to be interred in the place which Werther had selected for himself.

The steward and his sons followed the corpse to the grave. Albert was unable to accompany them. Charlotte's life was despaired of. The body was carried by labourers. No priest attended.

THE BANNER OF THE UPRIGHT SEVEN

BY

GOTTFRIED KELLER

TRANSLATED BY

MURIEL ALMON

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

GOTTFRIED KELLER was born in Zurich on July 19, 1819. His father, who was a turner, died when his son was only five; but his energetic and devoted mother contrived to provide Gottfried with a good elementary education. When he was fifteen he was expelled from school for taking part in a boyish conspiracy against a teacher, and he at once set about becoming a painter. Finding it difficult to obtain proper instruction in Zurich, he went in 1840 to Munich; but though the opportunities of the Bavarian capital were important for his general development, he returned home in 1842 without assurance of making a success in his art. The next six years, spent at home with his mother and sister, saw his gradual turning from painting to literature; and in 1846 he issued a volume of poems to which little attention was paid. When he was twenty-nine, the government of the canton gave him a scholarship of eight hundred francs for foreign study, and with this he went to Heidelberg, where, in spite of the confusion of the revolution of 1848, he made friends of men like Henle the pathologist, Hettner the literary historian, and Feuerbach the philosopher, all of whom had a profound effect upon his thinking. From Heidelberg he went to Berlin, where he hoped to equip himself as a dramatist; and there in 1854-5 he published his great autobiographical novel, "Green Henry." This work was appreciated by his friends and brought him some money, though at the time no very wide reputation, and after six years of semi-starvation in the Prussian capital he again went home to his mother's house. "The People of Seldwyla," a collection of admirable short stories, was issued in 1856, but still he made no great popular success.

But at last fortune favored him when, in 1861, he was appointed Clerk of the Canton of Zurich, a position he filled

efficiently for fifteen years. In 1872 appeared his "Seven Legends," the whimsical humor and mock realism of which brought general recognition. Five years later came the historical stories called "Zurich Novels"; in 1881 "The Epigram"; in 1883 "Collected Poems," establishing his place as a lyric poet of high rank; and in 1886 "Martin Salander," a novel of contemporary Switzerland. His genius was now generally recognized both at home and abroad; and when he died on July 15, 1890, he stood at the head of German letters. He was never married.

Keller was a writer of great independence, and cannot be classed with any of the schools. The closeness of his observation and his fidelity in rendering both the good and the bad sides of life ally him with the realists; but his imagination was too much alive to allow of his being properly described by their label. He knew the Swiss of his own time intimately, and he has portrayed them in their homely provincialism as well as in their sturdy self-respect and love of freedom.

"The Banner of the Upright Seven," one of the stories from "The People of Seldwyla," is an excellent example of the faculty which made him the greatest of German humorists. The story has genuine sentiment, but sentiment restrained as always in his books; it has sympathy for youthful ambition and youthful love, as well as for the political enthusiasm of the delightful old fellows whose name it bears; but both sentiment and sympathy are overshadowed by the rich humor which pervades the whole. Pure Swiss it no doubt is, but its appeal is to all hearts open to wholesome human affection and aspirations.

W. A. N.

CRITICISMS AND INTERPRETATIONS

I

By John Firman Coar

SCHILLER has been criticised for letting the Swiss peasants in "William Tell" speak as they do. What peasants, it is asked, would utter such thoughts? The peasants and simple burghers of the life that Keller studied and depicted is the reply. To a German these peasants seem curiously unreal. But Keller was no idealist when he depicted peasant and burgher life. His people speak as they think and they think as they speak, and they do both as Keller knew them to do it in everyday life. Theirs was the inestimable benefit of democratic government and democratic culture. A compact nationality, self-educated to the duties and privileges of citizenship, leaders in the widest possible dissemination of knowledge as the best guaranty of civic progress and justice—could Keller, a Swiss, depict the life of this people as anything else than a civic and intellectual democracy?

This perspective gives to situations, characters, and actions their true proportions. They are supremely real. His individuals are not equal in civic worth and intellectual capacity, but shade off in wonderfully fine lines, thereby enhancing the effect. Paragons and deep-dyed villains do not challenge our credulity, nor are we wearied by the persistent greetings of familiar faces in new garments. One of the triumphs of Keller's art is the ever new form in which humanity presents itself. And this is the glory of his social democracy, that it recognizes the inviolable right of individuality, since it founds state and society upon the achievement of individual worth. Ethic manhood is something that neither state nor society can impart. It lies

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"I wish, Charlotte, to be buried in the dress I wear at present: it has been rendered sacred by your touch. I have begged this favour of your father. My spirit soars above my sepulchre. I do not wish my pockets to be searched. The knot of pink ribbon which you wore on your bosom the first time I saw you, surrounded by the children—Oh, kiss them a thousand times for me, and tell them the fate of their unhappy friend! I think I see them playing around me. The dear children! How warmly have I been attached to you, Charlotte! Since the first hour I saw you, how impossible have I found it to leave you! This ribbon must be buried with me: it was a present from you on my birthday. How confused it all appears! Little did I then think that I should journey this road! But peace! I pray you, peace!

"They are loaded—the clock strikes twelve. I say amen. Charlotte, Charlotte! farewell, farewell!"

A neighbor saw the flash, and heard the report of the pistol; but as everything remained quiet, he thought no more of it.

In the morning, at six o'clock, the servant went into Werther's room with a candle. He found his master stretched upon the floor, weltering in his blood, and the pistols at his side. He called, he took him in his arms, but received no answer. Life was not yet quite extinct. The servant ran for a surgeon, and then went to fetch Albert. Charlotte heard the ringing of the bell; a cold shudder seized her. She wakened her husband and they both rose. The servant, bathed in tears, faltered forth the dreadful news. Charlotte fell senseless at Albert's feet.

When the surgeon came to the unfortunate Werther, he was still lying on the floor; and his pulse beat, but his limbs were cold. The bullet, entering the forehead over the right eye, had penetrated the skull. A vein was opened in his right arm; the blood came, and he still continued to breathe.

From the blood which flowed from the chair, it could be inferred that he had committed the rash act sitting at his bureau, and that he afterwards fell upon the floor. He was

found lying on his back near the window. He was in full-dress costume.

The house, the neighbourhood, and the whole town were immediately in commotion. Albert arrived. They had laid Werther on the bed. His head was bound up, and the paleness of death was upon his face. His limbs were motionless; but he still breathed, at one time strongly, then weaker, —his death was momently expected.

He had drunk only one glass of the wine. "Emilia Galotti" lay open upon his bureau.

I shall say nothing of Albert's distress or of Charlotte's grief.

The old steward hastened to the house immediately upon hearing the news; he embraced his dying friend amid a flood of tears. His eldest boys soon followed him on foot. In speechless sorrow they threw themselves on their knees by the bedside, and kissed his hands and face. The eldest, who was his favourite, hung over him till he expired; and even then he was removed by force. At twelve o'clock Werther breathed his last. The presence of the steward, and the precautions he had adopted, prevented a disturbance; and that night, at the hour of eleven, he caused the body to be interred in the place which Werther had selected for himself.

The steward and his sons followed the corpse to the grave. Albert was unable to accompany them. Charlotte's life was despaired of. The body was carried by labourers. No priest attended.

THE BANNER OF THE UPRIGHT SEVEN

BY

GOTTFRIED KELLER

TRANSLATED BY

MURIEL ALMON

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

GOTTFRIED KELLER was born in Zurich on July 19, 1819. His father, who was a turner, died when his son was only five; but his energetic and devoted mother contrived to provide Gottfried with a good elementary education. When he was fifteen he was expelled from school for taking part in a boyish conspiracy against a teacher, and he at once set about becoming a painter. Finding it difficult to obtain proper instruction in Zurich, he went in 1840 to Munich; but though the opportunities of the Bavarian capital were important for his general development, he returned home in 1842 without assurance of making a success in his art. The next six years, spent at home with his mother and sister, saw his gradual turning from painting to literature; and in 1846 he issued a volume of poems to which little attention was paid. When he was twenty-nine, the government of the canton gave him a scholarship of eight hundred francs for foreign study, and with this he went to Heidelberg, where, in spite of the confusion of the revolution of 1848, he made friends of men like Henle the pathologist, Hettner the literary historian, and Feuerbach the philosopher, all of whom had a profound effect upon his thinking. From Heidelberg he went to Berlin, where he hoped to equip himself as a dramatist; and there in 1854-5 he published his great autobiographical novel, "Green Henry." This work was appreciated by his friends and brought him some money, though at the time no very wide reputation, and after six years of semi-starvation in the Prussian capital he again went home to his mother's house. "The People of Seldwyla," a collection of admirable short stories, was issued in 1856, but still he made no great popular success.

But at last fortune favored him when, in 1861, he was appointed Clerk of the Canton of Zurich, a position he filled

efficiently for fifteen years. In 1872 appeared his "Seven Legends," the whimsical humor and mock realism of which brought general recognition. Five years later came the historical stories called "Zurich Novels"; in 1881 "The Epigram"; in 1883 "Collected Poems," establishing his place as a lyric poet of high rank; and in 1886 "Martin Salander," a novel of contemporary Switzerland. His genius was now generally recognized both at home and abroad; and when he died on July 15, 1890, he stood at the head of German letters. He was never married.

Keller was a writer of great independence, and cannot be classed with any of the schools. The closeness of his observation and his fidelity in rendering both the good and the bad sides of life ally him with the realists; but his imagination was too much alive to allow of his being properly described by their label. He knew the Swiss of his own time intimately, and he has portrayed them in their homely provincialism as well as in their sturdy self-respect and love of freedom.

"The Banner of the Upright Seven," one of the stories from "The People of Seldwyla," is an excellent example of the faculty which made him the greatest of German humorists. The story has genuine sentiment, but sentiment restrained as always in his books; it has sympathy for youthful ambition and youthful love, as well as for the political enthusiasm of the delightful old fellows whose name it bears; but both sentiment and sympathy are overshadowed by the rich humor which pervades the whole. Pure Swiss it no doubt is, but its appeal is to all hearts open to wholesome human affection and aspirations.

W. A. N.

CRITICISMS AND INTERPRETATIONS

I

By John Firman Coar

SCHILLER has been criticised for letting the Swiss peasants in "William Tell" speak as they do. What peasants, it is asked, would utter such thoughts? The peasants and simple burghers of the life that Keller studied and depicted is the reply. To a German these peasants seem curiously unreal. But Keller was no idealist when he depicted peasant and burgher life. His people speak as they think and they think as they speak, and they do both as Keller knew them to do it in everyday life. Theirs was the inestimable benefit of democratic government and democratic culture. A compact nationality, self-educated to the duties and privileges of citizenship, leaders in the widest possible dissemination of knowledge as the best guaranty of civic progress and justice—could Keller, a Swiss, depict the life of this people as anything else than a civic and intellectual democracy?

This perspective gives to situations, characters, and actions their true proportions. They are supremely real. His individuals are not equal in civic worth and intellectual capacity, but shade off in wonderfully fine lines, thereby enhancing the effect. Paragons and deep-dyed villains do not challenge our credulity, nor are we wearied by the persistent greetings of familiar faces in new garments. One of the triumphs of Keller's art is the ever new form in which humanity presents itself. And this is the glory of his social democracy, that it recognizes the inviolable right of individuality, since it founds state and society upon the achievement of individual worth. Ethic manhood is something that neither state nor society can impart. It lies

in the power of the individual to make or unmake his life, and he alone can solve the secret of his personality. Easier it is for him to do so amid surroundings that open his heart to the great glory of life, but still he alone can do so. That is Keller's income.

Keller grew to manhood in surroundings which were as nearly identical with Schiller's philosophic ideal of freedom as human conditions can well be. The Switzerland of his manhood days was the best possible justification of the ideal picture that Schiller drew in "William Tell." Therefore the optimism of Keller is so sturdy, so free from sentimentality, and so thoroughly human. His poetry is the noblest consummation of Heine's gospel of the divine beauty of life.

Keller believed with all his soul in the self-redemption of society, and used the word society in its broadest signification. And his belief was vitalized by that which he saw in Swiss life. The germs of the past were bearing fruit in the present, and in the present the germs of a future harvest were swelling. He was not one of those complacent optimists who cannot discern with critical eye and whose complacency deadens the best impulses and stands in the way of energetic striving. Swiss life in his stories is by no means a paradise. His words to B. Auerbach (June 25, 1860) betoken the attitude he took toward this life, as they also reveal the genuine democracy of his artistic striving: "Here in Switzerland we have, to be sure, many good qualities, and in respect to public character, evidently at present an honest purpose to acquire respectable and inspiriting forms of living, and the people is proving itself plastic (mobile), happy, and buoyant; but all is not gold that glitters by any means. However, I consider it the duty of a poet not merely to glorify the past, but to strengthen the present, the germs of the future, and beautify it in such a manner that people may still be able to believe: yes, we are like that, and that is the course of our life. If poets do this with a certain measure of kindly irony which deprives their productions of false pathos, then I am convinced that the people will come to be in fact and in appearance what it good-

naturedly imagines itself to be and what even now it really is in its inmost disposition."—From "Studies in German Literature" (1903).

II

By Calvin Thomas

UP to a dozen years before his death Keller had received little attention in Germany; to-day there is a library of books about him, and he is universally considered a fixed star of high magnitude. While he was an ardent Swiss republican, and while the life that he depicts is almost exclusively Swiss, the Germans of the empire have pretty generally accepted him as their greatest master of prose fiction since Goethe.

Keller was a romantic realist with the soul of a poet, the eye of a man of science, and the temperament of an artist who loves life in all its manifestations. But this leaves his humour out of the account, and his humour is precisely the best part of him. In a broad sense he is didactic—like Goethe; that is, he felt that it was his mission to comprehend and describe the character of his Swiss countrymen, to the end of furthering them toward higher ideals of communal life. But this attitude never clouds his vision for the facts. He sees at every pore, as Emerson said of Goethe. He does not select ugliness for special or angry scrutiny, any more than he avoids it through excess of daintiness, but takes all things as they come. What he offers is not medicine but food—the nourishment of sane and delightful art. But no one should go to him for an exciting narrative. His spell is not in his plot. In "Green Henry," particularly, his pace is so very leisurely that one sometimes wishes there were not so many little things to be taken note of by the way.—From "A History of German Literature" (1909).

THE BANNER OF THE UPRIGHT SEVEN

KASPAR HEDIGER, master tailor of Zurich, had reached the age at which an industrious craftsman begins to allow himself a brief hour of rest after dinner. So it happened that one beautiful March day he was sitting not in his manual but in his mental workshop, a small, separate room which for years he had reserved for himself. He was glad that the weather was warm enough for him to occupy it again. In winter neither the old customs of his class nor his income permitted him to have an extra room heated simply that he might sit there to read. And this was at a time when there were already tailors who went shooting and rode their horses daily, so closely do the gradations of culture dovetail into one another.

Master Hediger, however, might have been proud of the appearance he presented in his neatly kept little back room. He looked almost more like an American settler than a tailor. A strong and intelligent face with heavy whiskers, surmounted by a powerful, bald dome was bending over "The Swiss Republican," while he read the leading article with a critical expression. There were at least twenty-five well-bound folio volumes of this "Republican" in a little walnut bookcase with a glass door, and they contained scarcely anything that Hediger, for twenty-five years, had not lived and fought through. The case also held Rotteck's "Universal History," a Swiss history by Johannes Müller, and a handful of political brochures and such like; a geographical atlas and a portfolio full of caricatures and pamphlets—mementoes of bitterly passionate days—lay on the lowest shelf. The wall of the little room was adorned with the portraits of Columbus, Zwingli, Hutten, Washington, and Robespierre; for Hediger was not to be trifled with and sanctioned the

Reign of Terror, after it was over. Besides these world-famous heroes, there were portraits of several progressive Swiss to which were affixed in their own handwriting highly edifying and discursive inscriptions, regular little essays. Leaning against the bookcase was a well-kept, shining musket with a short side-arm hanging on it and a cartridge-pouch in which, at all times, there were thirty cartridges. That was *his* fowling-piece with which he went out, not for hares and partridges, but for aristocrats and Jesuits, for breakers of the constitution and traitors to the people. Until now his lucky star had kept him from shedding any blood, owing to lack of opportunity; nevertheless more than once he had seized his musket and hurried to the square. That was at the time of the riots, when he kept the gun standing between the bed and the wardrobe and would not allow it to be moved, "for," he used to say, "no government and no battalions can protect justice and liberty where a citizen is not able to step out of doors and see what is going on."

While the stout-hearted master was absorbed in his article, now nodding approvingly, now shaking his head, his youngest son Karl, a fledgling clerk in a government office, came in.

"What do you want?" asked Master Hediger harshly, for he did not like to be disturbed in his little den.

Karl, somewhat uncertain as to the success of his request, asked whether he might have his father's gun and cartridge-pouch for the afternoon as he had to go to the drill-ground.

"No use to ask, I won't hear of it!" said Hediger shortly.

"But why not? I won't hurt it," his son continued humbly and still insistently, because he simply had to have a gun if he did not want to be marched off to the detention room. But the old man only repeated in a louder tone:

"Won't hear of it! I can only wonder at the persistence of these gentlemen sons of mine who show so little persistence in other things that not one of them has stuck to the occupation which I allowed him to learn of his own free choice. You know that your three older brothers, one after another, as soon as they had to begin to drill, wanted my gun and that they none of them got it. And yet now here you come slinking along after it. You have your own fair pay, no one to support—get your own weapons, as becomes

a man of honor. This gun doesn't leave its place except when I need it myself."

"But it's only for a few times. You surely don't expect me to buy an infantry rifle when I'm going to join the sharpshooters later and shall have to get myself a carbine."

"Sharpshooters! That's good too! I should only like to know why you feel it to be so necessary to join the sharpshooters when you've never yet fired a single shot. In my day a man had to have burnt a good deal of powder before he might make such an application. Nowadays a man turns sharpshooter haphazard, and there are fellows wearing the green coat who couldn't bring down a cat off the roof, but who, to be sure, can smoke cigars and act the gentleman. It's no concern of mine."

"Oh," said the boy almost whimpering, "give it to me just this once. I'll see about getting another to-morrow, but it's impossible for me to do anything today, it's too late."

"I will not give my gun to anyone," replied Master Hediger, "who does not know how to handle it. If you can take the lock off this gun and take it apart properly you can have it, otherwise it stays here."

With that he hunted in a drawer for a screwdriver, handed it to his son and pointed to the gun. In desperation Karl tried his luck and began to loosen the screws in the lock. His father watched him scornfully and it was not long before he cried:

"Don't let the screwdriver slip so; you'll spoil the whole thing. Partly loosen all the screws and then take them out, it's easier that way. There, at last!"

Karl now held the lock in his hand but didn't know what next to do with it, so he laid it down with a sigh, already, in imagination, seeing himself in the detention room. But old Hediger, once interested, now picked up the lock to give his son a lesson, explaining it as he took it apart.

"You see," he said, "first you remove the plunger-spring with this spring-hook—like this; then comes the screw of the sear-spring, you only unscrew that half way, then knock the sear-spring like this so that the pin here comes out of the hole; now you take the screw out entirely. Now the sear-spring, then the sear-pin, the sear; now then, the bridle-

screw and here the bridle-hammer; next the tumbler-pin, the trigger, and finally the tumbler; this is the tumbler. Hand me the neat's-foot oil out of the little cupboard there; I'll oil the screws a bit while I have them here."

He had laid all the parts on the newspaper. Karl watched him eagerly and handed him the little bottle, thinking that the atmosphere had cleared. But after his father had wiped off the parts of the lock and oiled them afresh, instead of putting them together again he threw them promiscuously into the cover of a little box and said,

"We'll put the thing together again this evening; now I will finish reading my paper."

Disappointed and savage, Karl went out to complain to his mother. He stood in intense awe of the state authority whose school he was now to enter as a recruit. He had never been punished since he had outgrown school and not during his last years there either, and now the thing was to begin again on a higher plane, merely because he had depended upon his father's gun.

His mother said: "Your father is really quite right. All you four boys earn more than he does, and that thanks to the education he gave you; but not only do you spend all your money on yourselves, you keep on coming all the time to annoy your father by borrowing all sorts of things: his dress-coat, field-glass, drawing instruments, razor, hat, gun, and sabre. The things that he takes such good care of you borrow and bring back ruined. It seems as if the whole year round you are busy thinking up something else to borrow from him; but he, on his part, never asks anything of you, although you owe him your life and everything else. Just this once more I will help you."

Hereupon she went in to Master Hediger and said: "I forgot to tell you that Frymann the carpenter sent a message to say that the Band of Seven would meet this evening to discuss certain matters, something political, I think." He was at once pleasantly affected.

"Is that so?" he said, rose, and began to walk up and down; "I am surprised that Frymann didn't come himself to speak with me first about it, to consult me." After a few minutes he dressed quickly, put on his hat, and left with the words,

"Wife, I am going out now at once, I must find out what it's about. I haven't been out of the house this spring anyway, and it's such a beautiful day to-day. Good-bye!"

"There! Now he won't be home before ten o'clock to-night," said Mrs. Hediger laughing, and she bade Karl take the gun, be careful of it and bring it home early.

"Take it!" lamented her son, "why he's got the lock all apart and I can't put it together again."

"Well, I can," answered his mother and went into the little room with her son. She turned the parts of the lock out of the cover, sorted out the springs and screws and very skilfully began to put them together.

"Where the devil did you learn that, mother?" cried Karl, amazed.

"I learnt it in my father's house," she replied. "My father and my seven brothers used to make me clean all their guns and rifles when they had been shooting. I often cried as I did it, but I was finally able to handle them like a gunsmith's apprentice. The whole village called me 'Gunsmithy,' and I nearly always had dirty hands and a black smudge on the tip of my nose. My brothers shot and drank us out of house and home, so that I, poor child, was glad enough that your father, the tailor, married me."

While she talked her dexterous fingers had really put the lock together and fastened it to the stock. Karl hung the shining cartridge-pouch over his shoulder, took the gun and hurried off as fast as he could go to the drill-ground, where he arrived only just in time. Soon after six o'clock he brought the things back again, succeeded to taking the lock apart himself, and mixed the parts together in the box-cover.

By the time he had finished supper it had grown dark. He went to the boat-landing, hired a boat and rowed along the shore till he came to that part of the lake where carpenters and stone-cutters had their yards. It was a glorious evening; a mild south wind gently rippled the water, the full moon shone on the distant stretches of the lake and sparkled brightly on the little waves near by, and the stars burned brilliantly in the sky. The snow mountains, their presence felt rather than seen, looked down on the lake like

pale spectres. All industrial litter, the petty and restless outline of the buildings, disappeared in the darkness and were transformed by the moonlight into great calm masses —in short, the landscape was appropriately set for the coming scene.

Karl Hediger rowed rapidly on until he was close to a large lumber-yard; there he softly sang the first verse of a little song a couple of times, and then rowed slowly and easily out from the shore. A slender girl rose from where she had been sitting among the piles of lumber, untied a skiff, stepped into it and rowed deliberately, making a few turns as she went, after the soft-voiced boatman. When she caught up with him the young people greeted each other and rowed on without stopping, gunwale to gunwale, far out into the liquid silver of the lake. With youthful vigor they described a wide curve with several spirals, the girl leading and the boy following with gentle strokes of his oar, without leaving her side, and one could see that the couple were not unpractised in rowing together. When they found themselves in absolute silence and solitude, the young woman pulled in her oars and stopped. That is, she shipped only one oar and continued to hold the other over the gunwale as if playing with it, but not without a purpose, for when Karl, who had also stopped, tried to approach quite close to her, to board her skiff in fact, she was most skilful in keeping his boat off by giving it a single push with her oar every now and then. Nor did this manœuvre seem to be new, for the young man soon resigned himself and sat still in his little boat.

Now they began to chat, and Karl said:

"Dear Hermine! Now I can really turn the proverb about and say: what I had in abundance in my youth I wish for in old age, but in vain. How often we used to kiss when I was ten and you were seven, and now that I am twenty I mayn't even kiss your finger-tips."

"Once for all, I never want to hear another word of those impudent lies!" cried the girl half angrily, half laughing. "You've made it all up and it's false, I certainly don't remember any such familiarity."

"Unfortunately!" cried Karl; "but I remember it so much

the better. And I remember too that it was you who began it and were the temptress."

"Karl, how horrid of you!" interrupted Hermine, but he went on unrelentingly:

"You must remember how often, when we were tired helping the poor children fill their broken baskets with shavings—and how cross it always made your carpenters—I used to have to build a little hut out of ends of boards, hidden away in among the big piles of lumber, a little hut with a roof and a door and a bench in it. And then when we sat on the little bench, with the door shut, and I might at last sit idle a minute, who was it that used to throw her arms around my neck and kiss me more times than I could count?"

At these words he nearly pitched into the water, for as he had tried again to approach unnoticed as he talked, she suddenly gave his little boat such a violent push that it almost upset. Her clear laugh rang out as his left arm slipped into the water to the elbow and he swore.

"Just you wait," he said; "I'll pay you out for this some day!"

"There's time enough ahead," she replied, "you needn't be in too much of a hurry, my dear sir." Then she continued somewhat more seriously, "Father has found out about our intentions; I didn't deny them, in the main; he won't hear of such a thing, and forbids us ever to think of it again. So that is how we stand now."

"And do you intend to bow to your father's decree as dutifully and unresistingly as you seem to?"

"At least I shall never do the exact opposite of his wishes, and still less would I dare to stand in open hostility to him, for you know that he bears a grudge a long time, and is capable of a deep, slow-consuming anger. You know too, that, although he has been a widower for five years, he has not married again on my account; that is something that a daughter ought certainly to consider. And, now that we are on this subject, I must tell you too, that, under these circumstances, I don't think it proper for us to see each other so often. It's bad enough for a child to be disobedient in her heart; but there would be something hateful in our actually

doing things every day that would displease our parents if they knew about them, and so I don't want to meet you alone oftener than once a month at the most, instead of nearly every day as we have been doing. And for the rest just let time go on."

"Let time go on! And you really can and will let things go like this?"

"Why not? Are they so important? It is possible that we may have each other after all, it is also possible that we may not. But the world will go on just the same, perhaps we will forget each other of our own accord, for we are still young; in any case, it doesn't seem to me that we've any reason to make a great to-do."

The seventeen-year-old beauty delivered this speech in an apparently cold and matter-of-fact tone, at the same time picking up her oars and heading for the shore. Karl rowed beside her full of anxiety and apprehension, and no less full of vexation at Hermine's words. She was half glad to know that the hot-headed fellow had something to worry about, but at the same time, the conversation had made her, too, pensive, and particularly the separation of four weeks which she had imposed on herself.

Thus Karl finally succeeded in taking her by surprise and bringing his boat up against hers with a sudden pull. In an instant he held her slender body in his arms, and drew her part way towards him, so that they both leaned over the deep water, their boats tipped away over threatening to overturn at the slightest movement. Hence the girl was helpless and had to submit when Karl pressed seven or eight passionate kisses on her lips. Then gently and carefully he righted her and her boat. She stroked her hair back out of her face, seized her oars, panted, and, with tears in her eyes, cried angrily and threateningly:

"Just wait, you scamp, till I hold the reins! Heaven knows, I'll make you feel that you've got a wife!"

With that she rowed rapidly, without looking round at him again, towards her father's yard and home.

Karl, however, filled with triumph and bliss, called after her, "Good night, Miss Hermine Frymann; that tasted good."

Mrs. Hediger had told her husband nothing but the truth when she caused him to go out. She had merely saved up the message to use when she thought best, and then had done so at the right moment. A meeting really was held, a meeting of the Band of Seven, or of the Staunch, or of the Upright, or of the Lovers of Liberty, as they interchangeably called themselves. They were simply a circle of seven old and tried friends, all master-craftsmen, patriots, arch-politicians and stern domestic tyrants after the pattern of Master Hediger. Born, one and all, in the previous century, they, as children, had seen the downfall of the old régime, and then for many years had lived through the storms and birth-pangs of the new period, until, with the clearing of the political atmosphere in the late forties, Switzerland once more came into power and unity. Several of them came from the common domains, the former subject-land of the Swiss Confederates, and they remembered how, as peasant children, they had been obliged to kneel by the roadside when a coach with Confederate barons and the court-usher came driving by. Others were distant relatives or connections of captive or executed revolutionaries; in short, they were all filled with an unquenchable hatred of all aristocracy, which, since the downfall of the latter, had merely turned to bitter scorn. But when later the same thing reappeared in democratic garb, and, combined with the old usurpers of power, the priests, stirred up a struggle that lasted for several years, there was added to their hatred of the aristocracy a hatred of the "blackcoats"; indeed their belligerent temper now turned not only against lords and priests, but even against their own kind, against entire masses of the excited populace. This demanded of them in their old age an unexpected, composite expenditure of power, which test, however, they stood bravely.

These seven men were anything but insignificant. In all popular assemblies, meetings and such like, they helped to form a solid centre, stuck to their posts indefatigably, and were ready day and night to do for their party errands and business which could not be trusted to paid workers, but only to those who were absolutely reliable. The party leaders often consulted them and took them into their con-

fidence, and if a sacrifice was required, the seven men were always the first to contribute their mite. For all this they desired no other reward but the triumph of their cause, and their clear conscience; never did one of them put himself forward, or strive for his own advantage or aspire to an office, and their greatest honor was, on occasion, to shake the hand of this or that "famous Confederate"; but he must be the right sort and "clean above the loins" as they put it.

These stout-hearted citizens had grown accustomed to one another through decades of intimacy, called one another by their Christian names, and finally came to form a strong private society, but without any other statutes than those they bore in their hearts. They met twice a week, and as, even in this small band, there were two inn-keepers, the meetings were held alternately at their houses. Those were very pleasant and informal times; quiet and grave as the Seven were in larger assemblies, they were equally noisy and merry among themselves; none of them made any pretences, and none beat round the bush; sometimes they all talked at once, sometimes they listened attentively to one of their number, according to their humor and mood. Not only politics was the subject of their conversations, but also their domestic life. If one of them was in trouble and anxiety, he laid before the others whatever oppressed him; the cause was discussed, and its remedy was made a common matter; if one of them felt himself injured by another, he would bring his complaint to the Seven, who would sit in judgment and admonish the offender. During these proceedings they were alternately very passionate, or very quiet and dignified, or even ironical. Twice, traitors, crooked fellows, had sneaked in among them, been recognized and in solemn assembly condemned and turned out, that is, beaten black and blue by the fists of the doughty greybeards. If a real misfortune overtook the party to which they were attached, that entirely eclipsed any domestic misfortune, they would hide singly in the darkness and shed bitter tears.

The most eloquent and prosperous among them was Frymann, the carpenter, a veritable Croesus with an imposing

establishment. The most impecunious was Hediger, the tailor; but his opinion was only second in importance to Frymann's. His political fanaticism had long since lost him his best customers; nevertheless he had educated his sons well, and so had no means left. The other five men were well situated; they listened more than they talked when important matters were under discussion by the Band of Seven, but made up for that by the weightiness of their words at home, and among their neighbors.

To-day there were really important transactions on hand, which Frymann and Hediger had already discussed. The period of unrest, of struggle and of political effort, was past for these stout-hearted citizens, and their long experiences seemed for once to have come to an end with the conditions that they had attained. "All's well that ends well," they might say, and they felt themselves to be victorious and content. And so, as the shades of evening were falling on their political life, they felt that they might indulge in a crowning festivity, and, as the Band of Seven, attend in a body the first national shooting match to be held since the adoption of the new constitution of 1848, which was to take place at Aarau the following summer.

Now most of them had long since become members of the Swiss Shooting Association, and they all, except Hediger, who contented himself with his musket, possessed good rifles, with which in former years they had sometimes gone shooting on Sunday. Singly, they had also already attended other festivals, so that there seemed to be nothing so very unusual in their present purpose. But a spirit of outward pomp had taken possession of some of them, and the proposal made was really nothing less than that they should appear in Aarau with their own banner, bringing a handsome trophy as a gift.

When the little company had drunk a few glasses of wine and were in good spirits, Frymann and Hediger came out with the proposal, which somewhat surprised their modest fellow-members nevertheless, so that they wavered irresolutely for some minutes. For the idea of attracting so much attention and marching out with a banner did not quite appeal to them. But as they had long since forgotten how

to refuse their support to any bold stroke or undertaking with a real meaning, they resisted only long enough for the speakers to paint to them in glowing colors the banner as a symbol, and their procession as a triumph of true and tried friendship, and to show them that the appearance of seven old greybeards such as they, with a banner of friendship, would certainly make good sport. Only a little banner should be made, of green silk, with the Swiss coat of arms and a fitting inscription.

Once the question of the banner was settled, the trophy was taken up; its value was fixed fairly easily at about two hundred francs, old style. But the choice of the object itself caused a lengthier and almost heated discussion. Frymann opened the general inquiry and invited Kuser, the silversmith, as a man of taste, to give his opinion. Kuser gravely drank a good draught, coughed, thought a while, and said it was fortunate that he just happened to have a beautiful silver cup in his shop, which, if that were agreeable to the others, he could thoroughly recommend, and would let them have at the very lowest price. Hereupon followed a general silence broken only by brief remarks such as "That might do!" or "Why not?" Then Hediger asked whether anyone else wished to propose anything. Whereupon Syfrig, the skilful smith, took a swallow, plucked up courage, and said:

"If it is agreeable to you all, I will also express an idea now. I have forged a very practical plough of solid iron, which, as you know, won praise at the agricultural exhibition. I am prepared to part with this fine piece of work for two hundred francs, although that would not pay for the labor of making it; but it is my opinion that this tool and symbol of agriculture would be the kind of prize that would most suitably represent the common people. Not that I wish to reflect on other proposals."

During this speech Bürgi, the crafty cabinet-maker, had also been thinking the matter over, and when again a short silence ensued and the silversmith began to pull a long face, the cabinet-maker unburdened himself thus:

"An idea has occurred to me too, dear friends, which would probably give rise to a great deal of fun. Years

ago I had an order from a couple from out of town who were about to be married, for a double canopy bed of the finest walnut, with bird's-eye maple veneer; the young couple hung round my workshop every day measuring the length and the breadth, and billing and cooing before the journeymen and apprentices, minding neither their jokes nor their insinuations. But when the time came for the wedding they suddenly parted, hating each other as a cat hates a dog, not a soul knew why; one went this way, one went that, and the bedstead was left standing as immovable as a rock. At cost price it's worth a hundred and eighty francs, but I'll gladly lose eighty and let it go for a hundred. Then we can have a mattress made for it and set it up in the trophy hall, fully made up, with the inscription: 'For a single Confederate, as an encouragement!' How's that?"

Merry laughter rewarded this idea; only the smiles of the silversmith and the blacksmith were faint and wry; but Pfister, the inn-keeper, immediately raised his hearty voice and said with his accustomed frankness:

"Well gentlemen, if it's the programme for each of us to bring his own pig to market, then I know of something better than anything yet proposed. I have in my cellar a well-sealed cask of '34 claret, so-called Swiss blood, which I bought myself in Basle more than twelve years ago. You are all so temperate and modest in your demands, that I have never ventured to tap the wine, and yet I have two hundred francs tied up in it, for there are just a hundred measures. I will give you the wine for what it cost, and reckon the cask as cheaply as possible, glad if I can only make room for something that will sell better, and may I never leave this place if such a gift wouldn't do us honor."

This speech, during which the three who had made their suggestions had already began to murmur, was scarcely ended, when Erismann, the other inn-keeper, took the floor and said:

"If this is the way it's going, I won't be left behind either, but am ready to declare that I think I have the best thing for our purpose, and that is my young milch cow, a thoroughbred Oberland, that I am just ready to sell if I can

find a good purchaser. If we tie a bell round the neck of this handsome animal, a milking stool between her horns, adorn her with flowers—"

"And put her under a glass globe in the trophy hall!" interrupted Pfister, irritated; and with that, one of those thunderstorms broke that sometimes made the meetings of the Seven tempestuous, but only to be succeeded by sunshine that was all the brighter for what had passed. They all talked at once, defended their own proposals, attacked those of the others and accused one another of selfish motives. For they always came right out with what they thought, and settled matters by means of the plain truth, not by dissimulation and covering up, as a kind of false culture often leads men to do.

When the noise had become almost deafening Hediger tapped his glass loudly, and, raising his voice, said:

"Men! Don't get excited but let us proceed calmly to our goal. As trophies there have been suggested a cup, a plough, a complete canopy bed, a cask of wine and a cow. Permit me to examine your proposals more closely. Your cup, my dear Ruedi, I know well; it is a fixture in your shop, has been there in your show window for years and years; in fact, I believe it was once your masterpiece. Nevertheless, its antiquated form would forbid our choosing it and presenting it as new. Your plough, Chueri Syfrig, seems to be not absolutely practical after all, otherwise you would certainly have sold it three years ago. But we must bear in mind that our prize ought to give real pleasure to whoever wins it. Your canopy bed, on the contrary, Henry, is a novel and certainly a delightful idea, and it would undoubtedly occasion remarks of a very popular character. But to carry it out properly, would require plenty of fine bedding and that would exceed the sum we have fixed by too much for only seven people. Your 'Swiss blood' Lienert Pfister is good, and it will be still better if you will give us a cheaper price, and finally tap the cask for us so that we can have it to drink on our anniversaries. Finally, against your cow, Felix Erismann, there is nothing to be said except that she kicks over the pail regularly whenever she is milked. That is why you want to sell her; for, to be sure, that is

not a pleasing habit. But what do you think? Would it be right if some honest young peasant won the animal, took it joyfully home to his wife, who would joyfully start to milk it, and then would see the sweet, frothy milk upset on the ground? Think of the poor woman's disgust, vexation, and disappointment, and of the embarrassment of the good marksman after this scene had been repeated two or three times. Yes, my dear friends, don't take it amiss, but it must be said: all our proposals have the common fault of thoughtlessly and hastily seeking to make the honor of the fatherland a source of profit and calculation. What if the same thing has been done thousands of times by high and low, we, in our circle, have not done it, and we wish so to continue. So let every man bear the cost of the gift without ulterior motive, so that it may really be a trophy of honor!"

The five profit-seekers who had hung their heads in shame, now cried in one voice, "Well said! Kaspar has spoken well," and they demanded that he himself should propose something. But Frymann took the floor and said:

"It seems to me that a silver cup is more suitable than anything else to be given as a trophy. It retains its value, cannot be used up, and is a handsome reminder of happy days and of the valiant men of the house. The house in which a silver cup is preserved can never quite decay, and who can say whether much else is not also preserved for the sake of such a memorial. And is not art given the opportunity by fashioning ever new and pleasing forms, to increase the variety of these vessels, and thus to exercise its creative power and to bear a ray of beauty into the most distant valley, so that gradually a vast treasure of precious prize-cups will accumulate in our fatherland, precious alike in form and metal? And how fitting it is that these treasures, scattered over the whole country, cannot be made to serve the common uses of every-day life, but in their pure brilliance, in their chaste forms, continue to keep the higher things before our eyes, and thus seem to hold fast the idea of unity and the sunlight of days ideally spent. Away then with the trash that is beginning to pile up in our trophy-halls, a prey to moths and to the most

ordinary uses, and let us hold fast to the venerable old drinking-cup! Truly, if I were living in the days when all that is Swiss was drawing to its end, I could not imagine a more uplifting crowning festivity than to gather together the thousands and tens of thousands of cups of all sorts and shapes belonging to all the clubs, societies and individuals, in all their radiance of by-gone days, with all their memories, and to drink a last toast to the declining fatherland—"

"Hush, churlish guest! What unworthy thoughts!" cried the Upright and Staunch, and shuddered. But Frymann continued:

"As it becomes a man in the vigor of his prime sometimes to think of death, so, too, in a meditative hour he may turn his gaze on the certain end of his fatherland, that he may love its present all the more fervently, for everything is transitory and subject to change on this earth. Have not much greater nations than we perished? Or would you linger on like the Wandering Jew who cannot die, serving in turn all the new nations as they arise, he who buried the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans? No, a nation that knows that a time will come when it will no longer be makes all the more intense use of its days, lives so much the longer, and leaves a glorious memory; for it will not rest until it has brought to light and exercised the capabilities that lie within it, like a man who knows no rest until he has set his house in order before he leaves this life. That, in my opinion, is the chief thing. Once a nation has performed its task, what do a few longer or shorter days of existence matter? New figures are already waiting at the portals of their time. And so I must confess that once a year, during some sleepless night, or on quiet paths, I fall a prey to such thoughts, and try to imagine what the nation will be like that will some day hold sway in these mountains after we are gone. And each time I return to my work with greater energy, as if I could thus hasten the work of my nation so that that people of the future will walk over our graves with respect.

"But away with these thoughts and back to our joyful prospects! I would suggest that we order a new cup from

our master silversmith, on which he promises to make no profit, but to give as much value as possible. For this purpose let us have an artist make a good design which shall depart from the ordinary meaningless pattern, but because of our limited means let him pay more attention to the proportions, to the form and simple grace of the whole, than to rich ornamentation and, after this design, Master Kuser will furnish us with a pleasing and substantial piece of work."

This proposal was accepted and the business disposed of. Frymann, however, immediately took the floor again and began:

"Now that we have settled these matters of general interest, my friends, permit me to bring up another special question, and to make a complaint that we may adjust it together in friendly fashion according to our old custom. You know that our good friend, Kaspar Hediger, is the father of four lively boys whose desire to marry as youngsters makes the whole neighborhood unsafe. In fact, three of them already have wives and children, although the eldest is not yet twenty-seven. There remains the youngest, just turned twenty, and what is he doing? Running after my only daughter and turning her head. Thus these diabolical marriage-fiends have penetrated into the circle of intimate friendship, and now threaten to cloud it. Apart from the fact that the children are much too young, I frankly confess here that such a marriage would be contrary to my wishes and intentions. I have a large business and a considerable fortune; therefore, when the time comes, I shall seek a son-in-law who is a business man with a capital corresponding to mine, and thus able to carry on the building enterprises that I have in mind; for you know that I have bought up extensive building lots, and am convinced that Zurich will grow considerably larger. But your son, my good Kaspar, is a government clerk, and has nothing but his scanty salary, and even if he rises it will never be much bigger, and his income is fixed once for all with no way of augmenting it. Let him stick to his position, he is provided for for life, if he is economical; but he doesn't need a rich wife. A rich official is an absurdity, taking the bread out of other

people's mouths, and I certainly would not give my money for a fellow to loaf on, or, in his inexperience, to use for all sorts of experiments. In addition to all this, it would go against the grain with me to have the true and tried friendship that exists between Kaspar and me transformed into a relationship. What, are we to burden ourselves with family trials and mutual dependence? No, my friends, let us remain closely united until death, but independent of each other, free and answerable to none for our actions, and let us hear nothing of 'son's father-in-law' and 'daughter's father-in-law' and all such titles. And so I call upon you, Kaspar, to declare in this intimate circle of friends that you will support me in my purpose and will oppose your son's course. And no offense, we all know one another."

"We know one another, that is well said," said Hediger solemnly after slowly taking a pinch of snuff. "You all know what bad luck I have had with my sons, although they are smart and lively lads. I had them taught everything that I wish I myself had learnt. They all knew something of languages, could write a good composition, were splendid at figures and had sufficient grounding in other branches of knowledge to keep, with a little effort, from ever relapsing into complete ignorance. Thank God, I used to think, that we are at last able to educate our boys to be citizens who can't be made to believe that black is white. And then I allowed each one to learn the trade he chose. But what happened? Scarcely did they have their indentures in their pockets and had looked about them a little, when the hammer got too heavy for them, they thought themselves too clever for artisans and began to look for clerical jobs. The devil knows how they did it, but the young scamps went like hot cakes. Well, apparently they do their work satisfactorily. One's in the post office, two are employed by railroad companies and the fourth sits in an office and maintains that he's a government official. After all, it's none of my business. He who doesn't want to be a master must remain a journeyman and work under others all his life. But, as money passes through their hands, all these young gentlemen clerks had to give security; I have no property myself, and so you all, in turn, furnished security for my

boys, amounting to forty thousand francs; the old tradesmen, their father's friends, were good enough for that! And now, how do you suppose I feel? How would I stand in your eyes if only one out of the four should take a false step, be guilty of some indiscretion or piece of carelessness?"

"Fiddlesticks!" cried the old men, "put all such nonsense out of your head. If they hadn't been good boys we wouldn't have done it, you can be sure."

"I know all that," replied Hediger, "but a year is a long time, and when it's gone there's another to come. I can assure you that it frightens me every time one of them comes into the house with a better cigar than usual. Will he not fall a victim to habits of luxury and self-indulgence? If I see one of their young wives coming along in a new dress, I fear that she is plunging her husband into difficulties and debt. If I see one of them talking in the street to a man who lives beyond his means, a voice within me cries, "Will he not lead him into some piece of folly?" In short, you see that I feel myself humble and dependent enough, and am far from wishing to add a feeling of obligation towards a rich kinsman, and from turning a friend into a master and patron. And why should I want my cocky young son to feel rich and safe, and to run round under my eyes with the arrogance that such a fellow assumes when he has never had the slightest experience of life? Shall I help to close the school of life to him so that he shall early become hard-hearted, an unmannerly and insolent duffer, who doesn't know how to earn his bread, and still has a tremendous opinion of himself? No, rest easy, my friend, here is my hand on it. No kith and kin for us!"

The two old men shook hands, the others laughed, and Bürgi said,

"Who would believe that you two who have just spoken such wise words in the cause of the fatherland, and have rapped us so hard on the knuckles, would turn round and do anything so foolish. Thank Heaven, I've still a chance to dispose of my double bed and I propose that we give it to the young couple for a wedding present."

"Voted!" cried the other four, and Pfister, the innkeeper, added,

"And I demand that my cask of Swiss blood be drunk at the wedding, which we shall all attend."

"And I'll pay for it if there is a wedding," shouted Frymann angrily, "but if not, as I know for certain will be the case, you pay for the cask, and we'll drink it at our meetings until it's gone."

"We'll take the wager," they agreed; but Frymann and Hediger pounded the table with their fists and continued to repeat:

"No kith and kinship for us! We don't want to be kinsmen, but independent, good friends!"

This declaration brought the eventful meeting at last to an end, and staunch and upright the Lovers of Liberty wandered to their homes.

The next day at dinner, after the journeymen had gone, Hediger informed his son and his wife of the solemn decision of the day before, that from now on no romance between Karl and the carpenter's daughter would be tolerated. Mrs. Hediger, the "Gunsmithy," was so tempted to laugh by this decree that the last drop of wine in her glass, which she was just about to swallow, got into her windpipe and caused a terrible fit of coughing.

"What is there to laugh at about that?" said Master Hediger irritatedly.

His wife answered: "Oh, I can't help laughing because the adage 'a cobbler should stick to his last' fits your club so well. Why don't you stick to politics instead of meddling with love affairs?"

"You laugh like a woman and talk like a woman," replied Hediger, very much in earnest, "it is just in the family that true politics begin; we are political friends, it is true, but in order to remain so it is necessary that we should not mix our families up, and treat the wealth of one as common property. I am poor and Frymann is rich, and so it shall remain; we enjoy our inward equality so much the more. And now, shall a marriage be the means of my sticking my finger into his house and his affairs, and arousing jealousy and embarrassment? Far be it from me!"

"Oh my, my, what wonderful principles!" answered Mrs. Hediger; "that's a fine friendship when one friend won't give his daughter to the son of the other! And since when has it meant treating wealth as common property when prosperity is brought into a family through marriage? Is it a reprehensible policy when a fortunate son succeeds in winning a rich and beautiful girl, because he thus attains to property and prominence, and is able to assist his aged parents and brothers, and help them to a place in the sun? For where once good fortune has entered it easily spreads, and without doing any damage to the one, the others can skilfully throw out their hooks in his shade. Not that I am looking for a life of luxury! But there are very many cases in which it is right and proper that a man who has become rich should be consulted by his poor relatives. We old people shall need nothing more; on the other hand, the time might come perhaps, when one or another of Karl's brothers might venture on a promising enterprise, or make a fortunate change if someone would lend him the means. And one or another of them will have a talented son who would rise to great things, if there was money enough to send him to the university. One might perhaps become a popular physician, another a prominent lawyer or even a judge, another an engineer or an artist, and all of them, once they had got so far, would find it easy to marry well, and so at last would form a respected, numerous, and happy family. What could be more natural than to have a prosperous uncle who, without harming himself, could throw open the doors of the world to his industrious but poor relatives? For how often does it happen that, owing to the presence in a family of one fortunate member, all the others get a taste of the world and grow wise? And will you drive in the bung on all these things and seal good fortune at its source?"

Hediger gave a laugh, full of annoyance, and cried,

"Castles in the air! You talk like the peasant woman with her milk pail! I see a different picture of the man who has become rich among his poor relatives. He, it is true, denies himself nothing and has always thousands of ideas and desires which he gratifies, and which lead him to

spend money on thousands of occasions. But let his parents and his brothers come to him, down he sits at his account book, looking important and vexed, sighs, and says, with his pen between his teeth: 'Thank God that you haven't the trouble and burden of administering such a fortune. I'd rather herd goats than watch a pack of spiteful and procrastinating debtors! No money coming in from any of them, and all of them trying to get out of paying and slip through my fingers. Day and night you have to be on the lookout that you are not cheated right and left. And if ever you do get a scoundrel by the collar, he sets up such a howl that you have to let him go in a hurry, or be decried as a usurer and a monster. Every official paper, every notice of days of expiration, every announcement, every advertisement has to be read over and over, or you will miss some petition or overlook some term. And there's never any money on hand. If someone repays a loan, he lays his money bag on the table in all the taverns in town and announces with a swagger that he's paid, and before he's out of the house there are three others waiting to borrow the money, one of whom even wants it without giving security! And then the demands made on you by the community, the charitable institutions, public enterprises, subscription lists of all kinds —they can't be avoided, your position demands it; but I can tell you, you often don't know whether you are standing on your head or your heels. This year I'm harder pressed even than usual; I've had my garden improved and a balcony built on to the house, my wife has been wanting to have it done for a long time, and now here are the bills. My physician has advised me a hundred times to keep a saddle horse—I can't even think of it, for new expenses keep coming up to prevent. Look there, see the little wine-press, of the most modern construction, that I had built so that I could press out the Muscatel grapes that I grow on trellises—God knows, I can't pay for it this year. Well, my credit is still good, thank Heaven.'

"That is the way he talks with a cruel boast underlying all his words and thus so intimidates his poor brothers and his old father that they say nothing about their request, and take themselves off again after admiring his garden and

his balcony and his ingenious wine-press. And they go to strangers for help and gladly pay higher interest simply to avoid listening to so much chatter. His children are handsomely and expensively dressed, and tread the streets daintily; they bring their poor cousins little presents and come twice a year to invite them to dinner, and that is a great lark for the rich children; but when the guests lose their shyness and even begin to be noisy, their pockets are filled with apples and they are sent home. There they tell all that they have seen and what they had to eat and everything is criticized; for rancor and envy fill the hearts of the poor sisters-in-law who flatter the prosperous member of the family notwithstanding, and are eloquent in their praise of her fine clothes. Finally some misfortune overtakes the father or the brothers and, whether he will or not, the rich man has to step into the breach for the sake of the family reputation. And he does so without much persuasion; but now the bond of brotherly equality and love is completely severed. The poorer brothers and their children are now the servants and slave-children of the master; year in, year out they are nagged at and corrected, they have to wear coarse clothing and eat black bread in order to make up a small part of the damage. The children are sent to orphan asylums and schools for the poor, and if they are strong enough they have to work in the master's house and sit at the lower end of the table in silence."

"Phew!" cried Mrs. Hediger, "what a tale! And do you really think that your own son here would be such a scoundrel? And has Fate ordained that just his brothers should meet with misfortunes that would make them his servants? They, who have always managed to take care of themselves till now? No, for the honor of our own blood I believe that a rich marriage would not turn all our heads like that, but that, on the contrary, my view would prove to be right."

"I don't mean to assert," replied Hediger, "that it would be just that way with us; but in our family too we should introduce outward differences and in time they would be followed by inward inequality; he who aspires to wealth, aspires to rise above his equals—"

"Bosh!" interrupted his wife, taking up the table cloth and shaking it out the window; "has Frymann, who actually owns the property that we are quarrelling about, grown any different from the rest of you? Aren't you of one mind and one heart and always putting your heads together?"

"That's different," cried her husband, "entirely different. He didn't get his property by scheming, nor win it in the lottery, but acquired it slowly franc by franc through the toil of forty years. And then we are not brothers, he and I, and are not concerned in each other's affairs, and that's the way we want it to continue, that's the point. And finally, he is not like other people, he is still one of the Staunch and Upright. But don't let us keep on considering only these petty personal affairs. Fortunately there are no tremendously rich people among us, prosperity is fairly well distributed; but let men with many millions spring up, men with political ambition, and you'll see how much mischief they do. There is the well-known spinner-king; he really has millions and is often accused of being an indifferent citizen and a miser, because he doesn't concern himself with public matters. On the contrary, he is a good citizen who consistently lets everyone go his own way, governs himself, and lives like any other man. But let this goldbug be a politically ambitious genius, give him some amiability, pleasure in ostentation and love of all sorts of theatrical pomp, let him build palaces and institutions and then see what harm he would do in the community, and how he would ruin the character of the people. There will come a time when, in our country, as elsewhere, large masses of money will accumulate without having been honestly earned and saved; then it will be for us to show our teeth to the devil; then it will be seen whether the bunting of our flag is made of fast colors and strong thread. To put it briefly, I don't see why a son of mine should stretch out his hand for another's goods, without having done a stroke to earn them. That's a fraud as much as anything is!"

"It's a fraud that's as old as the world," said his wife, laughing, "for two people who love each other to want to marry. All your long and high-sounding words won't change

that. Moreover, you are the only one to be made a fool of; for Master Frymann is wisely trying to prevent your children from becoming equal to his. But the children will have a policy of their own and will carry it out if there's anything in the affair, and that I don't know."

"Let them," said Master Hediger; "that's their business; mine is, not to favor anything of the sort, and in any case to refuse my consent as long as Karl is a minor."

With this diplomatic declaration and the latest number of the "Republican" he withdrew to his study. Mrs. Hediger, on the contrary, now wanted to get hold of her son and satisfy her curiosity by calling him to account; but she suddenly discovered that he had made off, as the whole discussion seemed to him to be absolutely superfluous and useless, and he did not care, in any case, to talk over his love affairs with his parents.

So much the earlier did he get into his little boat that evening and row out to where he had been on many previous evenings. But he sang his little song once and twice, and even through to the last verse without anyone showing herself, and after rowing up and down in front of the lumber yard for more than an hour in vain, he went back puzzled and depressed, and thought his affair was really in a bad way. On the following four or five evenings he had the same experience, and then gave up trying to meet the faithless girl, as he took her to be; for although he remembered her resolution only to see him once in four weeks, he thought that to be merely the preparation for a final rupture, and fell into indignant sadness. Hence the practice period for the sharpshooter recruits, which was just about to begin, came at a very welcome time. On several afternoons beforehand he went out to the range with an acquaintance who was a marksman to get at least a little practice, and be able to show the number of hits necessary for his application. His father looked on at this rather scornfully, and unexpectedly came to the range himself to dissuade his son in time from carrying out his foolish purpose, if, as he supposed, Karl knew nothing about shooting.

But he happened to get there just as Karl, with half a

dozen misses behind him, was making a number of rather good shots.

"You needn't tell me," said Hediger astonished, "that you've never shot before; you've secretly spent many a franc on it, that's sure."

"I have shot secretly, that's true, but at no cost. Do you know where, father?"

"I thought as much!"

"Even as a boy I often watched the shooting, listened to what the men said about it, and for years have so longed to do it that I used to dream about it, and after I had gone to bed I used to spend hours aiming at a target, and in that way I've fired hundreds of good shots."

"That's capital! At that rate, they'll order whole companies of riflemen into bed in the future, and put them through such a mental drill; that'll save powder and shoe leather."

"It's not so ridiculous as it sounds," said the experienced marksman who was teaching Karl, "it is certain that, of two riflemen who are equally gifted as regards eye and hand, the one who is accustomed to reflection will outstrip the other. Pulling the trigger requires an inborn knack and there are very peculiar things about it as there are about all exercises."

The oftener and the better Karl shot, the more did old Hediger shake his head; the world seemed to him to be turned upside down, for he himself had only attained to what he was and knew how to do by industry and strenuous practice; even his principles, which people often pack into their minds as easily and numerously as herrings, had only been acquired by persevering study in his little back room. Now, however, he no longer ventured to interfere, and departed, not without inward satisfaction at numbering among his sons one of his country's sharpshooters; and by the time he had reached home he was resolved to make Karl a well-fitting uniform of good cloth. "Of course, he will have to pay for it," he said to himself, but he knew in his heart that he never asked his sons to repay anything, and that they never offered to do so. That is wholesome for parents, and enables them to reach a good old age when

they can see how their children in turn are merrily fleeced by their grandchildren, and so it goes down from father to son, and all survive and enjoy good appetites.

Karl now had to go into barracks for several weeks, and developed into a good-looking and trained soldier who, although he was in love and neither saw nor heard anything of his sweetheart, nevertheless attentively and cheerfully performed his duties as long as the daylight lasted; and at night the conversation and jokes of his comrades gave him no chance to brood. There were a dozen of them, young fellows from different districts, who exchanged the tricks and jokes of their homes and continued to make the most of them long after the lights were out and until midnight came on. There was only one from the city besides Karl, and the latter knew him by name. He was a few years older than Karl and had already served as a fusileer. A bookbinder by trade, he had not done a stroke of work for a long time, but lived on the inflated rents of old houses which he cleverly managed to buy without capital. Sometimes he would sell one again to some simpleton at an exorbitant price, then if the purchaser could not hold it he would pocket the forfeit and the paid instalments and again take possession of the house, at the same time raising the rents once more. He was also skilful in making slight changes in the construction of the dwellings, thus enlarging them by the addition of a tiny chamber or little room, so that he might again raise the rent. These alterations were by no means practical or planned for convenience, but quite arbitrary and stupid; he knew, too, all the bunglers among the artisans, who did the worst and cheapest work and with whom he could do as he liked. When he could think of absolutely nothing else to do, he would have the outside of one of his old buildings whitewashed and ask a still higher rent. By these methods he enjoyed a good annual income without doing an hour's actual work. His errands and appointments did not take long, and he would spend as much time in front of other people's buildings as before his own reconstructed shanties, play the expert and give advice about everything. In all other matters he was the stupidest fellow in the world. Hence he was considered a shrewd and

prosperous young man who would make an early success in life, and he denied himself nothing. He considered himself too good for an infantry private and had wanted to become an officer. But there he had failed owing to his laziness and ignorance, and now by obstinate and importunate persistence he had got into the sharpshooters.

Here he sought to force himself into a position of respect, without exerting himself, solely with the aid of his money. He was forever inviting the non-commissioned officers and his comrades to eat and drink with him, and thought that by clumsy liberality he could obtain privileges and freedom. But he only succeeded in making himself a laughing-stock, though, to be sure, he did enjoy a sort of indulgence, in that the others soon gave up trying to make anything out of him and let him go his own way as long as he did not bother the rest.

A single recruit attached himself to him and acted as his servant, cleaned his arms and clothes and spoke in his defence. This was the tight-fisted son of a rich peasant, who had always a frightful appetite for food and drink whenever he could satisfy it at another's expense. He thought heaven would be his reward if he could carry back home all his shining silver and still be able to say he had lived merrily during his service and caroused like a true sharpshooter; at the same time he was jolly and good-natured and entertained his patron, who had much less voice than he, with his thin falsetto in which, from behind his bottle, he sang all sorts of popular country songs very oddly indeed; for he was a merry miser. And so Ruckstuhl, the young extortioner, and Spörri, the young skinflint, lived on in glorious friendship. The former always had meat and wine before him and did as he chose, and the latter left him as little as possible, sang and cleaned his boots and did not even scorn the tips that the other gave.

Meanwhile the others made fun of them and agreed among themselves that they would not tolerate Ruckstuhl in any company. This did not apply to his factotum, however, for, strangely enough, he was a good shot, and anyone who knows his business is welcome in the army whether he be a Philistine or a scamp.

Karl was foremost in making fun of the pair; but one night he lost his desire to joke, when the wine-gladdened Ruckstuhl boasted to his follower, after the room had grown quiet, of what a fine gentleman he was and of how he soon expected to marry a rich wife, the daughter of the carpenter Frymann, whom, if he read the signs aright, he could not fail to get.

Karl's peace of mind was now gone, and the next day, as soon as he had a free hour, he went to his parents to find out, by listening, what was going on. But as he did not care to introduce the subject himself, he heard nothing of Hermine until just before he went, when his mother told him she had wanted to be remembered to him.

"Why, where did you see her?" he asked as indifferently as he could.

"Oh, she comes to the market every day now with the maid to learn how to buy supplies. She always asks me for advice when we meet and then we make the rounds of the market and find a lot to laugh at; for she's always in good spirits."

"Oh, ho!" said Hediger, "so that's why you stay out so long sometimes! And it's match-making that you are up to? Do you think it's fitting for a mother to behave like that, running around with people who are forbidden to her son, and carrying messages?"

"Forbidden people! Nonsense! Haven't I known the dear child since she was a baby and I carried her in my arms? And now I'm not to associate with her! And why shouldn't she ask to be remembered to the people in our house? And why shouldn't a mother take such a message? And may not a mother be allowed to make a match for her child? It seems to me that she's the very person to do it! But we never talk about such things, we women are not half so keen about you ill-mannered men, and if Hermine takes my advice she won't marry anyone."

Karl did not wait for the end of the conversation but went his way; for she had sent him a message and there had been no mention of any suspicious news. Only he *did* tap his forehead, puzzled by Hermine's good spirits, for it was not like her to laugh so much. He finally decided it was a sign in his favor and she had been merry because

"And I demand that my cask of Swiss blood be drunk at the wedding, which we shall all attend."

"And I'll pay for it if there is a wedding," shouted Frymann angrily, "but if not, as I know for certain will be the case, you pay for the cask, and we'll drink it at our meetings until it's gone."

"We'll take the wager," they agreed; but Frymann and Hediger pounded the table with their fists and continued to repeat:

"No kith and kinship for us! We don't want to be kinsmen, but independent, good friends!"

This declaration brought the eventful meeting at last to an end, and staunch and upright the Lovers of Liberty wandered to their homes.

The next day at dinner, after the journeymen had gone, Hediger informed his son and his wife of the solemn decision of the day before, that from now on no romance between Karl and the carpenter's daughter would be tolerated. Mrs. Hediger, the "Gunsmithy," was so tempted to laugh by this decree that the last drop of wine in her glass, which she was just about to swallow, got into her windpipe and caused a terrible fit of coughing.

"What is there to laugh at about that?" said Master Hediger irritatedly.

His wife answered: "Oh, I can't help laughing because the adage 'a cobbler should stick to his last' fits your club so well. Why don't you stick to politics instead of meddling with love affairs?"

"You laugh like a woman and talk like a woman," replied Hediger, very much in earnest, "it is just in the family that true politics begin; we are political friends, it is true, but in order to remain so it is necessary that we should not mix our families up, and treat the wealth of one as common property. I am poor and Frymann is rich, and so it shall remain; we enjoy our inward equality so much the more. And now, shall a marriage be the means of my sticking my finger into his house and his affairs, and arousing jealousy and embarrassment? Far be it from me!"

"Oh my, my, what wonderful principles!" answered Mrs. Hediger; "that's a fine friendship when one friend won't give his daughter to the son of the other! And since when has it meant treating wealth as common property when prosperity is brought into a family through marriage? Is it a reprehensible policy when a fortunate son succeeds in winning a rich and beautiful girl, because he thus attains to property and prominence, and is able to assist his aged parents and brothers, and help them to a place in the sun? For where once good fortune has entered it easily spreads, and without doing any damage to the one, the others can skilfully throw out their hooks in his shade. Not that I am looking for a life of luxury! But there are very many cases in which it is right and proper that a man who has become rich should be consulted by his poor relatives. We old people shall need nothing more; on the other hand, the time might come perhaps, when one or another of Karl's brothers might venture on a promising enterprise, or make a fortunate change if someone would lend him the means. And one or another of them will have a talented son who would rise to great things, if there was money enough to send him to the university. One might perhaps become a popular physician, another a prominent lawyer or even a judge, another an engineer or an artist, and all of them, once they had got so far, would find it easy to marry well, and so at last would form a respected, numerous, and happy family. What could be more natural than to have a prosperous uncle who, without harming himself, could throw open the doors of the world to his industrious but poor relatives? For how often does it happen that, owing to the presence in a family of one fortunate member, all the others get a taste of the world and grow wise? And will you drive in the bung on all these things and seal good fortune at its source?"

Hediger gave a laugh, full of annoyance, and cried,

"Castles in the air! You talk like the peasant woman with her milk pail! I see a different picture of the man who has become rich among his poor relatives. He, it is true, denies himself nothing and has always thousands of ideas and desires which he gratifies, and which lead him to

spend money on thousands of occasions. But let his parents and his brothers come to him, down he sits at his account book, looking important and vexed, sighs, and says, with his pen between his teeth: 'Thank God that you haven't the trouble and burden of administering such a fortune. I'd rather herd goats than watch a pack of spiteful and procrastinating debtors! No money coming in from any of them, and all of them trying to get out of paying and slip through my fingers. Day and night you have to be on the lookout that you are not cheated right and left. And if ever you do get a scoundrel by the collar, he sets up such a howl that you have to let him go in a hurry, or be decried as a usurer and a monster. Every official paper, every notice of days of expiration, every announcement, every advertisement has to be read over and over, or you will miss some petition or overlook some term. And there's never any money on hand. If someone repays a loan, he lays his money bag on the table in all the taverns in town and announces with a swagger that he's paid, and before he's out of the house there are three others waiting to borrow the money, one of whom even wants it without giving security! And then the demands made on you by the community, the charitable institutions, public enterprises, subscription lists of all kinds —they can't be avoided, your position demands it; but I can tell you, you often don't know whether you are standing on your head or your heels. This year I'm harder pressed even than usual; I've had my garden improved and a balcony built on to the house, my wife has been wanting to have it done for a long time, and now here are the bills. My physician has advised me a hundred times to keep a saddle horse—I can't even think of it, for new expenses keep coming up to prevent. Look there, see the little wine-press, of the most modern construction, that I had built so that I could press out the Muscatel grapes that I grow on trellises—God knows, I can't pay for it this year. Well, my credit is still good, thank Heaven.'

"That is the way he talks with a cruel boast underlying all his words and thus so intimidates his poor brothers and his old father that they say nothing about their request, and take themselves off again after admiring his garden and

his balcony and his ingenious wine-press. And they go to strangers for help and gladly pay higher interest simply to avoid listening to so much chatter. His children are handsomely and expensively dressed, and tread the streets daintily; they bring their poor cousins little presents and come twice a year to invite them to dinner, and that is a great lark for the rich children; but when the guests lose their shyness and even begin to be noisy, their pockets are filled with apples and they are sent home. There they tell all that they have seen and what they had to eat and everything is criticized; for rancor and envy fill the hearts of the poor sisters-in-law who flatter the prosperous member of the family notwithstanding, and are eloquent in their praise of her fine clothes. Finally some misfortune overtakes the father or the brothers and, whether he will or not, the rich man has to step into the breach for the sake of the family reputation. And he does so without much persuasion; but now the bond of brotherly equality and love is completely severed. The poorer brothers and their children are now the servants and slave-children of the master; year in, year out they are nagged at and corrected, they have to wear coarse clothing and eat black bread in order to make up a small part of the damage. The children are sent to orphan asylums and schools for the poor, and if they are strong enough they have to work in the master's house and sit at the lower end of the table in silence."

"Phew!" cried Mrs. Hediger, "what a tale! And do you really think that your own son here would be such a scoundrel? And has Fate ordained that just his brothers should meet with misfortunes that would make them his servants? They, who have always managed to take care of themselves till now? No, for the honor of our own blood I believe that a rich marriage would not turn all our heads like that, but that, on the contrary, my view would prove to be right."

"I don't mean to assert," replied Hediger, "that it would be just that way with us; but in our family too we should introduce outward differences and in time they would be followed by inward inequality; he who aspires to wealth, aspires to rise above his equals—"

"Bosh!" interrupted his wife, taking up the table cloth and shaking it out the window; "has Frymann, who actually owns the property that we are quarrelling about, grown any different from the rest of you? Aren't you of one mind and one heart and always putting your heads together?"

"That's different," cried her husband, "entirely different. He didn't get his property by scheming, nor win it in the lottery, but acquired it slowly franc by franc through the toil of forty years. And then we are not brothers, he and I, and are not concerned in each other's affairs, and that's the way we want it to continue, that's the point. And finally, he is not like other people, he is still one of the Staunch and Upright. But don't let us keep on considering only these petty personal affairs. Fortunately there are no tremendously rich people among us, prosperity is fairly well distributed; but let men with many millions spring up, men with political ambition, and you'll see how much mischief they do. There is the well-known spinner-king; he really has millions and is often accused of being an indifferent citizen and a miser, because he doesn't concern himself with public matters. On the contrary, he is a good citizen who consistently lets everyone go his own way, governs himself, and lives like any other man. But let this goldbug be a politically ambitious genius, give him some amiability, pleasure in ostentation and love of all sorts of theatrical pomp, let him build palaces and institutions and then see what harm he would do in the community, and how he would ruin the character of the people. There will come a time when, in our country, as elsewhere, large masses of money will accumulate without having been honestly earned and saved; then it will be for us to show our teeth to the devil; then it will be seen whether the bunting of our flag is made of fast colors and strong thread. To put it briefly, I don't see why a son of mine should stretch out his hand for another's goods, without having done a stroke to earn them. That's a fraud as much as anything is!"

"It's a fraud that's as old as the world," said his wife, laughing, "for two people who love each other to want to marry. All your long and high-sounding words won't change

that. Moreover, you are the only one to be made a fool of; for Master Frymann is wisely trying to prevent your children from becoming equal to his. But the children will have a policy of their own and will carry it out if there's anything in the affair, and that I don't know."

"Let them," said Master Hediger; "that's their business; mine is, not to favor anything of the sort, and in any case to refuse my consent as long as Karl is a minor."

With this diplomatic declaration and the latest number of the "Republican" he withdrew to his study. Mrs. Hediger, on the contrary, now wanted to get hold of her son and satisfy her curiosity by calling him to account; but she suddenly discovered that he had made off, as the whole discussion seemed to him to be absolutely superfluous and useless, and he did not care, in any case, to talk over his love affairs with his parents.

So much the earlier did he get into his little boat that evening and row out to where he had been on many previous evenings. But he sang his little song once and twice, and even through to the last verse without anyone showing herself, and after rowing up and down in front of the lumber yard for more than an hour in vain, he went back puzzled and depressed, and thought his affair was really in a bad way. On the following four or five evenings he had the same experience, and then gave up trying to meet the faithless girl, as he took her to be; for although he remembered her resolution only to see him once in four weeks, he thought that to be merely the preparation for a final rupture, and fell into indignant sadness. Hence the practice period for the sharpshooter recruits, which was just about to begin, came at a very welcome time. On several afternoons beforehand he went out to the range with an acquaintance who was a marksman to get at least a little practice, and be able to show the number of hits necessary for his application. His father looked on at this rather scornfully, and unexpectedly came to the range himself to dissuade his son in time from carrying out his foolish purpose, if, as he supposed, Karl knew nothing about shooting.

But he happened to get there just as Karl, with half a

dozen misses behind him, was making a number of rather good shots.

"You needn't tell me," said Hediger astonished, "that you've never shot before; you've secretly spent many a franc on it, that's sure."

"I have shot secretly, that's true, but at no cost. Do you know where, father?"

"I thought as much!"

"Even as a boy I often watched the shooting, listened to what the men said about it, and for years have so longed to do it that I used to dream about it, and after I had gone to bed I used to spend hours aiming at a target, and in that way I've fired hundreds of good shots."

"That's capital! At that rate, they'll order whole companies of riflemen into bed in the future, and put them through such a mental drill; that'll save powder and shoe leather."

"It's not so ridiculous as it sounds," said the experienced marksman who was teaching Karl, "it is certain that, of two riflemen who are equally gifted as regards eye and hand, the one who is accustomed to reflection will outstrip the other. Pulling the trigger requires an inborn knack and there are very peculiar things about it as there are about all exercises."

The oftener and the better Karl shot, the more did old Hediger shake his head; the world seemed to him to be turned upside down, for he himself had only attained to what he was and knew how to do by industry and strenuous practice; even his principles, which people often pack into their minds as easily and numerously as herrings, had only been acquired by persevering study in his little back room. Now, however, he no longer ventured to interfere, and departed, not without inward satisfaction at numbering among his sons one of his country's sharpshooters; and by the time he had reached home he was resolved to make Karl a well-fitting uniform of good cloth. "Of course, he will have to pay for it," he said to himself, but he knew in his heart that he never asked his sons to repay anything, and that they never offered to do so. That is wholesome for parents, and enables them to reach a good old age when

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Karl was foremost in making fun of the pair; but one night he lost his desire to joke, when the wine-gladdened Ruckstuhl boasted to his follower, after the room had grown quiet, of what a fine gentleman he was and of how he soon expected to marry a rich wife, the daughter of the carpenter Frymann, whom, if he read the signs aright, he could not fail to get.

Karl's peace of mind was now gone, and the next day, as soon as he had a free hour, he went to his parents to find out, by listening. what was going on. But as he did not care to introduce the subject himself, he heard nothing of Hermine until just before he went, when his mother told him she had wanted to be remembered to him.

"Why, where did you see her?" he asked as indifferently as he could.

"Oh, she comes to the market every day now with the maid to learn how to buy supplies. She always asks me for advice when we meet and then we make the rounds of the market and find a lot to laugh at; for she's always in good spirits."

"Oh, ho!" said Hediger, "so that's why you stay out so long sometimes! And it's match-making that you are up to? Do you think it's fitting for a mother to behave like that, running around with people who are forbidden to her son, and carrying messages?"

"Forbidden people! Nonsense! Haven't I known the dear child since she was a baby and I carried her in my arms? And now I'm not to associate with her! And why shouldn't she ask to be remembered to the people in our house? And why shouldn't a mother take such a message? And may not a mother be allowed to make a match for her child? It seems to me that she's the very person to do it! But we never talk about such things, we women are not half so keen about you ill-mannered men, and if Hermine takes my advice she won't marry anyone."

Karl did not wait for the end of the conversation but went his way; for she had sent him a message and there had been no mention of any suspicious news. Only he *did* tap his forehead, puzzled by Hermine's good spirits, for it was not like her to laugh so much. He finally decided it was a sign in his favor and she had been merry because

she had met his mother. So he resolved to keep quiet, have faith in the girl, and let things take their course.

A few days later Hermine came to visit Mrs. Hediger, bringing her knitting with her, and there was so much cordiality, talking, and laughing that Hediger, cutting out a frock coat in his workshop, was almost disturbed and wondered what old gossip could be there. Still, he did not pay much attention to it till finally he heard his wife go to a cupboard and begin to rattle the blue coffee set. For the "Gunsmithy" was making as good a pot of coffee as she had ever brewed; she also took a good handful of sage leaves, dipped them in an egg-batter and fried them in butter, thus making so-called little mice, since the stems of the leaves looked like mouse-tails. They rose beautifully and made a heaping dish full, the fragrance of which, together with that of the fresh coffee ascended to Master Hediger above. When, finally, he heard her pounding sugar he became highly impatient to be called to the table; but he would not have gone one moment earlier, for he belonged to the Staunch and Upright. As he now entered the room he saw his wife and the graceful "forbidden person" sitting in close friendship behind the coffee-pot and, moreover, it was the blue-flowered coffee-pot; and besides the little mice there was butter on the table and the blue-flowered pot full of honey; it was not real honey, to be sure, but only cherry-jam, about the color of Hermine's eyes; and it was Saturday too, a day on which all respectable middle-class women scrub and scour, clean and polish, and never cook a bite that's fit to eat.

Hediger looked very critically at the whole scene and his greeting was rather stern; but Hermine was so charming and at the same time so resolute that he sat there as if muzzled and ended by going himself to get a "glass of wine" out of the cellar and even drawing it from the small keg. Hermine responded to this mark of favor by declaring that she must have a plate of mice kept for Karl, as he probably didn't get very good things to eat in the barracks. She took her plate and pulled out the finest mice by their tails with her own dainty fingers and kept on piling them up till at last Karl's mother herself cried that it was enough. Hermine

then put the plate beside her, looked at it with satisfaction from time to time, and occasionally picked out a piece and ate it, saying that she was Karl's guest now; after which she would conscientiously replace the plunder from the dish.

Finally it got to be too much for the worthy Hediger; he scratched his head and, urgent though his work was, hastily put on his coat and hurried forth to seek the father of the little sinner.

"We must look out," he said to him; "your daughter and my old woman are sitting at home in all their glory, hand in glove, and it all looks mighty suspicious to me; you know women are the very devil."

"Why don't you chase the young scallywag off?" said Frymann, annoyed.

"I chase her off? Not I; she's a regular witch! Just come along yourself and attend to her."

"Good, I'll come along with you and make the girl thoroughly understand how she's to behave."

When they got there, however, instead of Miss Hermine they found Karl, the sharpshooter, who had unbuttoned his green waistcoat and was enjoying his mice and what wine there was left all the more because his mother had just happened to mention that Hermine was going rowing on the lake again that evening as it would be bright moonlight and she hadn't been on the lake for a month.

Karl started out on the lake all the earlier because he had to be back in barracks at the sound of "taps," blown in heavenly harmonies by the Zurich buglers on beautiful spring and summer evenings. It was not yet quite dark when he reached the lumber yard; but alas, Master Frymann's skiff was not floating in the water as usual; it lay bottom up, on two blocks, about ten yards from the shore.

Was that a hoax, or a trick of the old man's, he wondered and, disappointed and angry, he was just about to row off when the great, golden moon rose out of the woods on Mt. Zurich and at the same time Hermine stepped out from behind a blossoming willow that hung full of yellow cattails.

"I didn't know that our boat was being freshly painted," she whispered, "so I'll have to come into yours, row fast!"

And she sprang lightly in, and sat down at the other end of the skiff which was scarcely seven feet long. They rowed out till they were beyond the range of any spying eye and Karl began at once to call Hermine to account as regarded Ruckstuhl, telling her of the latter's words and acts.

"I know," she said, "that this cavalier wants to marry me and that, in fact, my father is not disinclined to consent; he has already spoken of it."

"Is he possessed of the devil to want to give you to such a vagabond and loafer? What's become of his weighty principles?"

Hermine shrugged her shoulders and said: "Father is full of the idea of building a number of houses and speculating with them; for that reason, he wants a son-in-law who can be of assistance to him in such matters, particularly in speculating, and who will know that he is working for his own advantage in furthering the whole enterprise. He has in mind that he wants someone with whom he can take pleasure in working and scheming, as he would have done with a son of his own, and now this fellow appears to him to have just that kind of talent. All he needs, father says, to make him a practical expert, is a thorough business life. Father knows nothing of the foolish way he lives because he doesn't watch other people's doings and never goes anywhere except to his old friends. In short, as to-morrow is Sunday, Ruckstuhl has been invited to dine with us, to strengthen the acquaintance, and I'm afraid that he will plunge right into a proposal. Besides, I've heard that he's a wretched flatterer and an impudent fellow when he's trying to grab something that he wants."

"Oh well," said Karl, "you'll easily out-trump him."

"And I'll do it too; but it would be better if he didn't come at all and left my papa in the lurch."

"Of course that would be better; but it's a pious wish, he'll take good care not to stay away."

"I've thought of a plan, though it's rather a queer one to be sure. Couldn't you lead him into doing something foolish to-day or early to-morrow morning so that you'd both be sent to the guard-room for twenty-four or forty-eight hours?"

"You're very kind to want to send me to the lock-up for a couple of days just to spare you a refusal. Won't you do it cheaper?"

"It's necessary that you should share his suffering so that we may not have too much on our consciences. As for my refusal, I don't want it to come to the point where I shall have to say yes or no to the fellow; it's bad enough that he should talk about me in the barracks. I don't want him to get a step beyond that."

"You're right, sweetheart! Nevertheless I think the rascal will have to be locked up alone; a scheme is beginning to dawn on me. But enough of that, it's a pity to waste our precious time and the golden moonlight. Doesn't it remind you of anything?"

"What should it remind me of?"

"Of the fact that we haven't seen each other for four weeks and that you can hardly expect to set foot ashore again to-night unkissed."

"Oh, so you would like to kiss me?"

"Yes, even I; but there's no hurry, I know you can't escape. I want to enjoy the anticipation a few minutes longer, perhaps five, or six at the most."

"Oh, indeed! Is that the way you repay my confidence in you, and do you really care much about it? Wouldn't you consider a bargain?"

"Not though you spoke with the eloquence of an angel, not for a minute! There's no way out of it for you to-night, my lady."

"Then I will also make a declaration, my dear sir. If you so much as touch me with the tips of your fingers to-night against my will, it's all over between us and I will never see you again; I swear it by Heaven and my own honor. For I am in earnest."

Her eyes sparkled as she spoke. "That will take care of itself," replied Karl, "I'm coming soon now, so keep still."

"Do as you like," said Hermine curtly and was silent.

But whether it was that he thought her capable of keeping her word, or whether he himself did not want her to break her vow, he stayed obediently in his seat and gazed at her with shining eyes, peering to see by the moonlight if the

corners of her mouth were not twitching and she were not laughing at him.

"Then I shall have to console myself with the past again and let my memories compensate me," he began after a brief silence; "who would believe that those stern and firmly closed lips knew how to kiss so sweetly years ago!"

"You mean to begin on your shameless inventions again, do you? But let me tell you that I won't listen to such irritating nonsense any longer."

"Be calm! Just this once more we will direct our gaze back to those golden hours and more particularly to the last kiss that you gave me; I remember the circumstances as clearly and distinctly as if it were to-day, and I am sure that you do too. I was thirteen and you about ten and it was several years since we had kissed each other, for we felt very old and grown-up. But there was to be a pleasant ending after all—or was it the lark, the herald of the morn? It was a beautiful Whitmonday—"

"No, Ascension—" interrupted Hermine, but broke off in the middle of the word.

"You are right, it was a glorious Ascension Day in the month of May and we were on an excursion with a party of young people, we two being the only children among them; you stuck close to the big girls and I to the older boys and we disdained to play with each other or even to talk. After we had walked hither and yon we sat down in a bright grove of tall trees and began to play forfeits; for evening was coming on and the party did not want to go home without a few kisses. Two of them were condemned to kiss each other with flowers in their mouths without dropping them. After they, and the couple that tried it after them, had failed, you suddenly came running up to me without a trace of embarrassment, with a lily-of-the-valley in your mouth, stuck another between my lips and said, 'Try it!' Sure enough, both blossoms fell to join their sisters on the ground, but, in your eagerness, you kissed me all the same. It felt as if a beautiful, light-winged butterfly had alighted, and involuntarily I put up two finger-tips to catch it. The others thought I wanted to wipe my lips and laughed at me."

"Here we are at the shore," said Hermine and jumped out. Then she turned round again pleasantly to Karl.

"Because you sat so still and treated my word with the respect due to it," she said, "I will, if necessary, go out with you again before four weeks have passed and will write you a note to say when. That will be the first writing I have ever confided to you."

With that she hurried to the house. Karl rowed rapidly to the public landing so as not to miss the blast of the worthy buglers that pierced the mild air like a jagged razor.

On his way through the street he encountered Ruckstuhl and Spörri who were slightly tipsy; greeting them pleasantly and familiarly, he grasped the former by the arm and began to praise and flatter him.

"What the devil have you been up to again? What new trick have you been planning, you schemer? You're certainly the grandest sharpshooter in the whole canton, in all Switzerland, I *should* say."

"Thundering guns!" cried Ruckstuhl, highly flattered that someone else besides Spörri should make up to him and compliment him, "it's a shame that we have to turn in so soon. Haven't we time to drink a bottle of good wine together?"

"Sst! We can do that in our room. It's the custom among the sharpshooters anyway to take in the officers, at least once during their service and secretly carouse in their room all night. We're only recruits, but we'll show them that we're worthy of the carbine."

"That would be a great lark! I'll pay for the wine as sure as my name is Ruckstuhl! But we must be sly and crafty as serpents, or we'll do for ourselves."

"Don't worry, we're just the boys for this sort of thing. We'll turn in quite quietly and innocently and make no noise."

When they reached the barracks their room-mates were all in the canteen drinking a night-cap. Karl confided in a few of them, who passed the tidings on, and so each of them provided himself with a few bottles which, one after the other, they carried out unnoticed and hid under their cots. In their room they quietly went to bed at ten o'clock to wait till the rounds had been made to see if the lights

were out. They then all got up again, hung coats over the windows, lighted the lights, brought out the wine and began a regular drinking bout. Ruckstuhl felt as if he were in paradise, for they all drank to him and toasted him as a great man. His ardent desire to be considered somebody in military as well as in civil life without doing anything to deserve it made him stupider than he naturally was. When he and his henchman seemed to have been put completely out of business, various drinking feats were carried out. One of the men, while standing on his head, had to drink a ladle of wine which someone else held to his lips; another, seated in a chair, with a bullet suspended from the ceiling swinging round his head, had to drink three glasses before the bullet touched his head; a third had some other trick to perform, and on all who failed some droll penalty was imposed. All this was done in perfect silence; whoever made a noise also did penance, and they were all in their night-shirts so that, if surprised, they could crawl quickly into bed. Now as the time approached when the officer would make his rounds through the corridors, the two friends were also assigned a drinking-feat. Each was to balance a full glass on the flat of his sword and hold it to the other's mouth and each had to drain the glass so held without spilling a drop. They drew their short-swords with a swagger and crossed the blades with the glasses on them; but they trembled so that both glasses fell off and they did not get a drop. They were, therefore, sentenced to stand guard outside the door, in "undress uniform," for fifteen minutes, and this prank was admiringly said to be the boldest ever carried out in those barracks within the memory of man. Their haversacks and short-swords were hung crosswise over their shirts, they were made to put on their shakoes and blue leggings, but no shoes, and thus, their rifles in their hands, they were led out and posted one on either side of the door. They were scarcely there before the others bolted the door, removed all traces of the carousal, uncovered the windows, put out the lights and slipped into bed as if they had been asleep for hours. In the meantime the two sentries marched up and down in the gleam of the corridor-lamp, their rifles on their shoulders, and looked about them with bold glances.

Spörri, filled with bliss because he had been able to get drunk at no expense, grew quite reckless and suddenly began to sing, and that hastened the steps of the officer on duty who was already on the way. As he approached they tried to slip quickly into the room; but they couldn't open the door and before they could think of anything else to do the enemy was upon them. Now everything whirled through their heads in a mad dance. In their confusion each placed himself at his post, presented arms and cried, "Who goes there?"

"In the name of all that's holy, what does this mean? What are you doing there?" cried the officer on duty, but without receiving a sufficient answer, for the two clowns could not get out a sensible word. The officer quickly opened the door and looked into the room, for Karl who had been straining his ears, had hopped hastily out of bed, pushed back the bolt and as hastily hopped in again. When the officer saw that everything was dark and quiet and heard nothing but puffing and snoring, he cried, "Hallo there, men!"

"Go to the devil!" cried Karl, "and get to bed, you drunkards!" The others also pretended that they had been wakened and cried,

"Aren't those beasts in bed yet? Turn them out, call the guard!"

"He's here, I'm he," said the officer, "one of you light a light, quick."

This was done, and when the light fell on the two buffoons peals of laughter came from under all the bedclothes as if the entire company were taken utterly by surprise. Ruckstuhl and Spörri joined crazily in the laughter and marched up and down holding their sides, for their minds had now taken a tack in a different direction. Ruckstuhl repeatedly snapped his fingers in the officer's face and Spörri stuck out his tongue at him. When the derided officer saw that there was nothing to be done with the joyful pair, he took out his pad and wrote down their names. Now, as ill-luck would have it, he happened to live in one of Ruckstuhl's houses and had not yet paid the rent—due at Easter which was just over—it might be because he was not in funds or

because he had been too busy while on military duty to attend to it. In any case, Ruckstuhl's evil genius suddenly hit on this fact and, reeling towards the officer, he laughed foolishly and stuttered,

"P-pay your d-debts fir-firsht, m-mister, before you t-ta-take down peo-people's namesh. You know!"

Spörri laughed still louder. lurched and staggered back like a crab and, shaking his head. piped shrilly,

"P-p-pay your d-debts, mister, that-tha-that is well s-said."

"Four of you get up," said the officer quietly, "and take these men to the guard-house, see that they're well locked up at once. In about three days we'll see if they have slept this off yet. Throw their cloaks over their shoulders and let them take their trousers on their arms. March!"

"T-t-t-trousers," shouted Ruckstuhl, "th-that's what we need; there's sh-sh-shtill s-something left to fa-fall out—if-you-shake-them."

"If you sh-sh-shake them, mister," repeated Spörri and both of them swung their trousers about till the coins jingled in the pockets. So they marched off with their escort, laughing and shouting, through the corridors and down the stairs and soon disappeared in a cellar-like room in the basement, whereupon it grew quiet.

The following day at noon. Master Frymann's table was more elaborately set than usual. Hermine filled the cut-glass decanters with the vintage of '46, put a shining glass at every place, laid a handsome napkin on every plate, and cut up a fresh loaf from the bakery at the sign of the Hen where they baked an old-fashioned kind of bread for high days and holidays, the delight of all the children in Zurich and of the women who sat gossiping over their afternoon coffee-cups. She also sent an apprentice, dressed in his Sunday best, to the pastry-cook's to fetch the macaroni pie and the coffee cake, and finally she arranged the dessert on a small side table: little curled cookies, and wafers, the pound cake, the little "cocked hats," and the conical raisin loaf. Frymann, pleasantly affected by the beautiful Sunday weather, interpreted his daughter's zeal to mean that she

did not intend seriously to resist his plans, and he said to himself with amusement. "They're all like that! As soon as an acceptable and definite opportunity offers itself they make haste to seize it by the forelock!"

According to ancient custom Mr. Ruckstuhl was invited for twelve o'clock sharp. When, at a quarter past, he was not yet there, Frymann said.

"We will begin; we must accustom this cavalier to punctuality from the start."

And when the soup was finished and Ruckstuhl had still not arrived the master called in the apprentices and the maidservant who were eating by themselves that day and had already half done, and said to them:

"Sit down and eat with us, we don't want to sit staring at all this food. Pitch in and enjoy yourselves,

> 'Whoever late to dinner comes
> Must eat what's left or suck his thumbs.'"

There was no need to ask them a second time, and they were jolly and in good spirits, and Hermine was the merriest of all, and her appetite grew better and better the more annoyed and displeased her father became.

"The fellow seems to be a boor!" he growled to himself, but she heard it and said:

"He probably couldn't get leave; we mustn't judge him too hastily."

"Not get leave! Are you ready to defend him already? Why shouldn't he get leave if he cares anything about it?"

He finished his meal in the worst of humors and, contrary to his habit, went at once to a coffee-house simply that he should not be at home if the negligent suitor should finally come. Towards four o'clock, instead of joining the Seven as usual, he came home again, curious to see whether Ruckstuhl had put in an appearance. As he came through the garden, there sat Mrs. Hediger with Hermine in the summer-house, as it was a warm spring day, and they were drinking coffee and eating the "cocked hats" and the raisin loaf and seemed to be in high spirits. He said good afternoon to Mrs. Hediger, and although it annoyed him to see her there, he asked her at once whether she had no news

because he had been too busy while on military duty to attend to it. In any case, Ruckstuhl's evil genius suddenly hit on this fact and, reeling towards the officer, he laughed foolishly and stuttered,

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from the barracks, and if all the sharpshooters had not perhaps gone on an excursion.

"I think not," said Mrs. Hediger, "they were at church this morning and afterwards Karl came home to dinner; we had roast mutton and that is a dish he never deserts."

"Did he say nothing about Mr. Ruckstuhl or mention where he had gone?"

"Mr. Ruckstuhl? Yes, he and another recruit are in close confinement for getting dreadfully intoxicated and insulting their superiors; they say it was a most laughable scene."

"The devil take him!" said Frymann and straightway departed. Half an hour later he was saying to Hediger:

"Now it's your wife who is sitting with my daughter in the garden and rejoicing with her that my plan for a marriage has been wrecked."

"Why don't you drive her away? Why didn't you growl at her?"

"How can I, in view of our old friendship? You see, how these confounded affairs are already confusing our relations with one another. Therefore let us stand firm! No kinship for us!"

"No kinship indeed!" corroborated Hediger, and shook his friend by the hand.

July, and with it the National Shooting Match of 1849, was now scarcely a fortnight distant. The Seven held another meeting: for the cup and banner were finished and had to be inspected and approved. The banner was raised aloft and set up in the room, and in its shadow there now took place the stormiest session that had ever stirred the Upright Seven. For the fact suddenly became apparent that a banner carried in a presentation procession involves a speaker, and it was the choice of the latter that nearly wrecked the little boat with its crew of seven. Each in turn was chosen thrice, and thrice did each in turn most decisively decline. They were all indignant that none would consent, and it made each of them angry to think that just he should be picked out to bear this burden and do this unheard-of thing. As eagerly as other men come forward when it's a question of taking the floor and airing their

views, just so timidly did these men avoid speaking in public, and each plead his unfitness, and declared that he had never in his life done anything of the kind and never would. For they still believed speechmaking to be an honorable art requiring both talent and study, and they cherished an unreserved and honest respect for good orators who could touch them, and accepted everything that such a man said as true and sacred. They distinguished these orators sharply from themselves and imposed upon themselves the meritorious duty of attentive listeners, to consider conscientiously, to agree or to reject, and this seemed to them a sufficiently honorable task.

So when it appeared that no speaker was procurable by vote, a tumult and general uproar arose, in which each tried to convince another that he was the man who should sacrifice himself. They picked out Hediger and Frymann in particular and vigorously assaulted them. They, however, resisted forcibly, and each tried to shift it to the other till Frymann called for silence and said:

"My friends! We have made a thoughtless mistake and now we cannot fail to see that, after all, we had better leave our banner at home; so let us quickly decide to do that and attend the festival without any fuss."

Heavy gloom settled down on them at these words.

"He's right!" said Kuser, the silversmith.

"There's nothing else for us to do," added Syfrig, the ploughmaker.

But Bürgi cried: "We can't do that; people know what we intend to do and that the banner is made. If we give it up the story will go down to history."

"That's true, too," said Erismann, the innkeeper, "and our old adversaries, the reactionaries, will know how to make the most of the joke."

Their old bones thrilled with terror at such an idea, and once again the company attacked the two most gifted members; they resisted anew and finally threatened to withdraw.

"I am a simple carpenter and will never make a laughing stock of myself," cried Frymann, to which Hediger rejoined:

"Then how can you expect me, a poor tailor, to do it? I should bring ridicule on you all and harm myself, all to

no purpose. I propose that one of the innkeepers should be urged to undertake it; they are most accustomed to crowds than any of the rest of us."

But the innkeepers protested vehemently, and Pfister suggested the cabinet-maker because he was a wit and a joker.

"Joker! Not much!" cried Bürgi, "do you call it a joke to address the president of a national festival in the presence of a thousand people?"

A general sigh was the answer to this remark which made them realize the difficulties of the task more vividly than ever.

After this several members rose one by one from the table, and there was a running in and out and a whispering together in the corners. Frymann and Hediger alone remained seated, with gloomy countenances, for they divined that a fresh and deadly assault on them was being planned. Finally, when they were all assembled again, Bürgi stood up before these two and said:

"Kaspar and Daniel! You have both so often spoken to our satisfaction here, in this circle, that either of you, if he only will, can perfectly well make a short, public address. It is the decision of the society that you shall draw lots between you and that the result shall be final. You must yield to a majority of five to two."

Renewed clamor supported these words; the two addressed, looked at each other and finally bowed humbly to the decision, each in the hope that the bitter lot might fall to the other. It fell to Frymann who, for the first time, left a meeting of the Lovers of Liberty with a heavy heart, while Hediger rubbed his hands with delight—so inconsiderate does selfishness make the oldest of friends.

Frymann's pleasure in the approaching festival was now at an end and his days were darkened. He thought constantly of his speech without being able to find a single idea, because he kept seeking for something remote instead of seizing upon what lay near at hand and using it as he would have among his friends. The phrases in which he was accustomed to address them seemed homely to him, and he hunted about in his mind for something out of the ordinary and high-sounding, for a political manifesto, and

he did so not from vanity but from a bitter sense of duty. Finally he began to cover a sheet of paper with writing, not without many interruptions, sighs, and curses. With infinite pains he wrote two pages, although he had intended to compose only a few lines; for he could not find a conclusion, and the tortured phrases clung to one another like sticky burrs and held the writer fast in a confused tangle.

With the folded paper in his waistcoat pocket he went worriedly about his business, occasionally stepping behind some shed to read it again and shake his head. At last he confided in his daughter and read the draft to her to see what effect it made. The speech was an accumulation of words that thundered against Jesuits and aristocrats, richly larded with such expressions as "freedom," "human rights," "servitude," and "degradation"; in short it was a bitter and labored declaration of war, in which there was no mention of the Seven and their little banner, and moreover, the composition was clumsy and confused, whereas he usually spoke easily and correctly.

Hermine said it was a very strong speech, but it seemed to her somewhat belated, as the Jesuits and aristocrats had been conquered at last, and she thought a bright and pleasant declaration would be more appropriate since the people were contented and happy.

Frymann was somewhat taken aback and although, even as an old man, the fire of passion was still strong within him, he rubbed his nose and said:

"You may be right, but still you don't quite understand it. A man must use forcible language in public and spread it on thick, like a scene-painter, so to speak, whose work, seen close to, is a crude daub. Still, perhaps I can soften an expression here and there."

"That will be better," continued Hermine, "for there are so many 'therefores' in it. Let me look at it a minute. See, 'therefore' occurs in nearly every other line."

"It's the very devil," he cried, took the paper from her hand and tore it into a hundred pieces. "That's the end of it! I can't do it and I won't make a fool of myself."

But Hermine advised him not to try to write anything, to wait until just about an hour before the presentation and

then to settle on some idea and make a brief speech about it on the spur of the moment, as if he were at home.

"That will be best," he replied, "then if it's a failure, at least I have made no false pretenses."

Nevertheless he could not help beginning at once to turn over and torture the idea in his mind without succeeding in giving it form; he went about preoccupied and worried, and Hermine watched him with great satisfaction.

The festival week had come before they knew it, and one morning in the middle of it, the Seven started for Aarau before daybreak in a special omnibus drawn by four horses. The new banner fluttered brightly from the box; on its green silk shone the words, "Friendship in Freedom!" and all the old men were joyful and gay, serious and merry by turns, and Frymann alone appeared to be depressed and dubious.

Hermine was already staying with friends in Aarau, for her father rewarded her perfect housekeeping by taking her with him on all his jaunts; and more than once she had adorned the joyful circle of greybeards like a rosy hyacinth. Karl, too, was already there; although his military service had made demands enough on his time and his money, yet at Hermine's invitation he had gone to the festival on foot, and oddly enough had found quarters near where she was staying; for they had their affair to attend to, and no one could say whether they might not be able to make favorable use of the festival. Incidentally, he also wanted to shoot and, in accordance with his means, carried twenty-five cartridges with him; these he intended to use, no more and no fewer.

He had soon scented the arrival of the Upright Seven and followed them at a distance as, with their little banner, they marched in close order to the festival grounds. The attendance was larger on that day than on any other in the week, the streets were full of people in their best clothes, going and coming; large and small rifle clubs came along with and without bands; but none was as small as that of the Seven. They were obliged to wind their way through the crowd but, taking short paces, they kept in step nevertheless; their fists were closed and their arms hung straight at their sides in military fashion. Frymann marched ahead with the

banner, looking as if he were being led to execution. Occasionally he looked from side to side to see if no escape were possible; but his companions, glad that they were not in his shoes, encouraged him and called out to him bracing and pithy words. They were already nearing the festival grounds; the crackling rifle-fire already sounded close by, and high in the air the national marksmen's flag flew in sunny solitude and its silk now stretched out quiveringly to all four corners, now snapped gracefully above the people's heads, now hung down sanctimoniously, close to the staff, for a moment—in short, it indulged in all the sport that a flag can think of in a whole long week, and yet the sight of it stabbed the bearer of the little green banner to the heart.

Karl, seeing the merry flag and stopping to watch it a moment, suddenly lost sight of the little group and when he looked all round for it he could not discover it anywhere; it seemed as if the earth had swallowed it. Quickly he pressed through to the spot and then back to the entrance of the grounds and looked there; no little green banner rose from the throng. He turned to go back again, and in order to get ahead faster he took a side way along the street. There stood a little tavern, the proprietor of which had planted a few lean evergreens in front of the door, put up a few tables and benches and spread a piece of canvas above the whole, like a spider that spins her web close to a large pot of honey, so as to catch a fly now and then. Through the dirty window of this little house Karl happened to see the shining gilt tip of a flag-pole; in he went at once and behold, there, in the low-ceilinged room, sat his precious old men as if blown there by a thunderstorm. They lay and lounged this way and that on chairs and benches and hung their heads, and in the centre stood Frymann with the banner and said:

"That's enough! I won't do it! I'm an old man and don't want to bear the stigma of folly and a nickname for the rest of my days."

And with that he stood the banner in a corner with a bang. No answer followed until the pleased innkeeper came and placed a huge bottle of wine in front of the unexpected guests, although they had been too upset to order

anything. Hediger filled a glass, stepped up to Frymann and said:

"Come, old friend and comrade, take a swallow of wine and brace up."

But Frymann shook his head and spoke not another word. They sat in great distress, greater than they had ever known; all the riots, counter-revolutions, and reactions that they had experienced were child's play compared to this defeat at the gates of paradise.

"Then in God's name, let us turn round and drive home again," said Hediger who feared that even now fate might turn against him. At that Karl, who until now had stood on the threshold, stepped forward and said gaily:

"Gentlemen, give me the banner! I will carry it and speak for you, I don't mind doing it."

They all looked up in astonishment and a ray of relief and joy flashed across their faces; but old Hediger said sternly:

"You! How did you come here? And how can an inexperienced young shaver like you speak for us old fellows?"

But from all sides came cries of "Well done! Forward unfalteringly! Forward with the lad!" And Frymann himself gave him the banner, for a heavy weight had fallen from his heart and he was glad to see his old friends saved from the distress into which he had led them. And forward they went with renewed zest; Karl led, bearing the banner grandly aloft, and in the rear the innkeeper looked sadly after the vanishing mirage that had for a moment deceived him. Hediger alone was now gloomy and unhappy, for he did not doubt that his son would lead them deeper into the mire than ever. But they had already entered the grounds; the Grisons were just marching off, a long brown procession, and, passing them and in time to their music, the old men marched through the crowd, keeping step as perfectly as they had ever done. Again they had to mark time when three fortunate shots who had won cups crossed their path with buglers and followers; but all that, together with the loud noise of the shooting, only increased their festive intoxication and finally they uncovered their heads at the sight of the trophy-temple which blazed with treasures, and from

the turrets of which a host of flags fluttered showing the colors of all the cantons, towns, districts and parishes. In their shade stood several gentlemen in black and one of them held a brimming silver goblet in his hand ready to receive the arrivals.

The seven venerable heads floated like a sunlit cake of ice in the dark sea of the crowd, their scanty white hair fluttered in the gentle east wind and streamed in the same direction as the red and white flag high above them. By reason of their small number and their advanced age they attracted general attention, people smiled not without respect, and everyone was listening as the youthful standard-bearer stepped forward and in a fresh clear voice delivered this address:

"Beloved Countrymen! Here we come with our little banner, eight of us all told, seven greybeards with a young standard-bearer. As you see, each carries his rifle, without claiming to be a remarkably good shot; to be sure, none of us would miss the target and sometimes one of us hits the bull's eye, but if that should occur you can swear that he didn't mean to. So, as far as the silver is concerned that we shall carry away from your trophy-hall, we might just as well have stayed at home.

"Nevertheless, although we are not eminent marksmen, we couldn't keep away; we have come not to win trophies, but to present a modest little cup, an almost immodestly joyful heart, and a new banner that trembles in my hand with eagerness to fly from your fortress of flags. But we shall take our little banner home with us again, it is only here to receive its consecration. See, what it bears in golden letters: 'Friendship in Freedom'! Yes, it is friendship personified so to speak, that we bring to this festival, friendship based on patriotism, friendship rooted in the love of liberty. Friendship it was that brought together these seven hoary heads that glisten here in the sunlight, thirty, no forty years ago, and it has held them together through every storm, in good and evil days. It is a society that has no name, no president and no statutes; its members neither bear titles nor hold offices, it is unmarked timber from the forest depths of the nation, and it now steps forth for a moment into the sunlight

of the national holiday only to return presently to its place, to rustle and roar with thousands of other tree-tops in the hidden forest-dusk of the people, where only a few can know and call each other by name, and yet all are familiar and acquainted.

"Look at them, these old sinners! None of them stands in the odor of particular sanctity! Rarely is one of them seen at church! They do not speak well of ecclesiastical matters. But here, beneath the open sky, I can confide something strange to you, my countrymen: as soon as their fatherland is in danger they begin quite gradually to believe in God; first each one cautiously in his own heart, then ever more boldly, till one betrays his secret to another and they then, all together, cultivate a remarkable theology, the first and only doctrine of which is: 'God helps him who helps himself'! On days of rejoicing too, like this, when crowds of people are assembled and a clear blue sky smiles above them, they again fall a prey to these religious thoughts and then they imagine that God has hung the Swiss standard aloft and made the beautiful weather especially for us. In both cases, in the hour of danger and in the hour of joy, they are suddenly satisfied with the words that begin our constitution: 'In the name of God Almighty'! And such a gentle tolerance pervades them then—cross-grained though they are at other times—that they do not even ask whether it is the Roman Catholic or the Protestant God of Hosts that is meant.

"In short, a child who has been given a little Noah's ark filled with painted animals and tiny men and women, cannot be more pleased with it than they are with their beloved little fatherland and all the thousands of good things that are in it, from the moss-covered old pike lying at the bottom of its lakes to the wild bird that flutters round its icy peaks. Oh, what different kinds of people swarm here in this little space, manifold in their occupations, in manners and customs, in costume and language! What sly rascals and what moonstruck fools we see running around, what noble growth and what weeds thrive here merrily side by side, and it is all good and fine and dear to our hearts, for it is in our fatherland.

"So, considering and weighing the value of earthly things, they grow to be philosophers; but they can never get beyond the wonderful fact of the fatherland. True, they traveled in their youth and have seen many countries, not with arrogance, but honoring every land in which they found people of worth; but their motto remained ever the same: respect every man's mother country, but love your own!

"And how graceful and rich it is! The closer one looks at it the finer does its warp and woof appear, beautiful and durable, a model piece of handiwork!

"How diverting it is that there is not just one monotonous type of Swiss, but that there are various stamps of people from Zurich and Bern, Unterwalden and Neuenburg, the Grisons and Basle, and even two kinds of Baslers; and that Appenzell has a history of its own and Geneva another! This variety in unity—which God preserve—is the proper school in which to learn friendship, and it is only where political homogeneousness is transformed into the personal friendship of a whole people that the highest plane has been attained; for where the sense of citizenship fails, friendship will be successful and both will combine to form a single virtue.

"These old men have spent their years in toil and labor; they are beginning to feel the frailty of all flesh, it pinches one in one place, one in another. Yet, when summer comes, they go, not to the baths, but to the national festival. The wine of the Swiss festival is the healing spring that refreshes their hearts, the outdoor summer life of the nation is the air that strengthens their old nerves, surging waves of happy fellow-countrymen are the sea that bathes their stiff limbs and makes them active again. You will presently see their white heads disappear in this sea. So now, fellow Helvetians, give us the cup of welcome! Long live friendship in the fatherland! Long live friendship in freedom!"

"Long may it live! Bravo!" rang out from all sides, and the welcoming speaker replied to the address and saluted the old men, who made an odd and touching appearance as they stood before him.

"Yes," he concluded, "may our festivals never become anything worse than a school of manners for the young, and,

for the old, the reward of a clear public conscience, of faithful civic loyalty, and a fountain of pleasure! May they ever celebrate inviolable and vigorous friendship in our country, between district and district and between man and man! May your nameless and statuteless society, my venerable friends, live long!"

Again the toast was echoed all around and amid general applause the little banner was added to the others. Hereupon the little troop of the Seven wheeled about and made straight for the great festival hall to refresh themselves with a good luncheon and they were scarcely there before they all shook hands with their speaker and cried:

"Spoken from our hearts! Hediger, Kaspar! your boy is made of good stuff, he'll turn out well, let him go his own way. Just like us, but cleverer, we are a lot of old donkeys; but steadfast and unflinching, stand firm, Karl!" and so on.

But Frymann was quite dumbfounded; the boy had said just what he ought to have thought of, instead of banging away at the Jesuits. He too gave Karl his hand in friendship and thanked him for his help in time of need. Last of all, old Hediger came up to his son, took his hand also, fixed his eye keenly and firmly upon him and said:

"Son, you have revealed a fine but dangerous gift. Nurse it, cultivate it with loyalty, with a sense of duty, with modesty. Never lend it to the false and the unjust, to the vain and the trivial; for it may become as a sword in your hand that turns against you yourself, or against the good as well as the evil. Or it may become a mere fool's bauble. Therefore, look straight ahead, be modest, studious, but firm and unswerving. As you have done us honor to-day, remember always to do honor to your fellow-citizens, to your country, to give them joy; think of this and so you will be best preserved from false ambition! Unswerving! Don't think that you must always speak, let some opportunities pass, and never speak for your own sake, but always for some worthy cause. Study men, not in order to outwit and plunder them, but in order to awaken and set in motion the good in them, and, believe me, many who listen to you will often be better and wiser than you who speak. Never use sophisms and

petty hair-splitting which only move the chaff; the heart of the people can only be stirred by the full force of truth. Do not, therefore, court the applause of the noisy and restless, but fix your eye unswervingly on the cool-headed and the firm."

Scarcely had he finished this speech and released Karl's hand when Frymann seized it and said:

"Try to acquire an equal knowledge of all branches and enrich your store of principles that you may not sink into the use of empty phrases. After this first dash allow considerable time to pass without thinking of such things again. If you have a good idea, never speak just in order to air it but rather lay it aside; the opportunity will come more than once later for you to use it in a more developed and better form. But should someone else forestall you in uttering it, be glad instead of annoyed, for that is a proof that you have felt and thought something universal. Train and develop your mind and watch over your nature and study in other speakers the difference between a mere tongue-warrior and a man of truthfulness and feeling. Do not travel about the country nor rush through all the streets, but accustom yourself to understand the course of the world from your own hearth, in the midst of tried friends; then, when it is time for action, you will come forward with more wisdom than the hounds and tramps. When you speak, speak neither like a facetious hostler nor like a tragic actor, but keep your own natural character unspoilt and then speak as it dictates. Avoid affectation, don't strike attitudes, do not look about you like a field marshal before you begin, or, worse, as if you were lying in wait to spring upon the audience. Never say that you are not prepared when you are, for people will know your style and will perceive it at once. When you have done, do not walk about collecting compliments, or beam with self-satisfaction, but sit quietly down in your seat and listen attentively to the next speaker. Save your harsh phrases as you would gold, so that when, on occasion, you use them in just indignation, it will be an event, and they will strike your opponent like a bolt from the blue. But if you think you may ever associate with an opponent again and work with him, beware of letting your anger carry you

into the use of extreme expressions, that the people may not say,

'Rascals fight, and when the fight is o'er,
They're greater friends than e'er before'."

Thus spake Frymann, and poor Karl sat astonished and bewildered by all these speeches and did not know whether to laugh or to be puffed up. But Syfrig, the smith, cried:

"Now look at these two who didn't want to speak for us and can talk like books, as you see."

"Just so," said Bürgi, "but that has been the means of our gaining new growth; we have put forth a vigorous young shoot. I move that the lad be taken into the circle of us old fellows and from now on attend our meetings."

"So be it!" they all cried and clinked glasses with Karl, who somewhat unthinkingly drained his to the bottom, which lapse however the old men let pass without a murmur in view of the excitement of the moment.

When, thanks to a good lunch, the party felt sufficiently recovered from its adventure, the members scattered. Some went to try a few shots, some to see the trophy-hall and other arrangements, and Frymann went to fetch his daughter and the women whose guest she was; for they were all to meet again for dinner at the same table which stood nearly in the centre of the hall and not far from the platform. They took note of its number and separated in the best of spirits and free from all care.

Exactly at twelve o'clock the dinner guests, who were different ones every day and numbered several thousand people, sat down at the table. Country and city people, men and women, old and young, scholars and the unlearned—they all sat joyfully side by side and waited for the soup, opening bottles and cutting bread meanwhile. Not a single malicious face, not a scream or shrill laugh was seen or heard among them, nothing but the steady hum of a glad wedding feast magnified a hundredfold, the tempered wave-beat of a happy and self-contained ocean. Here a long table filled with marksmen, there a double row of blooming country girls, at a third table a meeting of so-called "old fellows" from all parts of the country, who had finally passed their examinations, and at a fourth a whole "immigrated" hamlet,

men and women together. Yet these seated hosts formed only half of the assemblage; an equally numerous crowd of spectators streamed uninterruptedly through the aisles and spaces and circled ceaselessly about the diners. They—praise and thanks be to God!—were the careful and economical ones who had counted the cost and satisfied their hunger elsewhere for even less money, that half of the nation that always manages things so much more cheaply and frugally, while the other half flings away money right and left; then there were also the over-fastidious ones who did not trust the cooking and thought the forks were too cheap; and finally there were the poor and the children, who were involuntary spectators. But the former made no unkind remarks and the latter displayed neither torn clothes nor jealous looks; on the contrary, the thrifty ones took pleasure in the spendthrifts, and the super-refined who thought the dishes of green peas in July ridiculous, walked about as good-humoredly as the poor who found their fragrance most tempting. Here and there, to be sure, a piece of culpable selfishness appeared as, for instance, when some tight-fisted young peasant succeeded in slipping unseen into a vacated place and eating away with the rest without having paid; and, what was still worse in the eyes of those who love order and discipline, this reprehensible act did not even result in an altercation and forcible ejection.

The head festival-host stood in front of the broad kitchen door and blew on a hunting horn the signal for a course to be served, whereupon a company of waiters rushed forward and dispersed to the right, to the left and straight ahead, executing a well practised manœuvre. One of them found his way to the table at which sat the Upright and Staunch, among them Karl, Hermine, and her friends, cousins or whatever they were. The old men were just listening eagerly to one of the principal speakers who had mounted the platform after a loud roll on the drum. There they sat, grave and composed, with forks laid down, stiff and upright, all their seven heads turned towards the platform. But they blushed like young girls and looked at each other when the speaker began with a phrase from Karl's speech, told of the coming of the seven greybeards, and made that the starting-point for his

own speech. Karl alone heard nothing, for he was joking quietly with the women, until his father nudged him and expressed his disapproval. As the orator finished amid great applause, the old men looked at one another again; they had been present at many assemblies but for the first time they themselves had been the subject of a speech and they dared not look around, so embarrassed were they, though at the same time more than happy. But, as the way of the world is, their neighbors all around did not know them, nor suspect what prophets were in their midst, and so their modesty was not offended. With all the greater satisfaction did they press one another's hands after each of them had gently rubbed his own to himself, and their eyes said: Forward unswervingly! That is the sweet reward of virtue and enduring excellence!

After this Kuser cried: "Well, we have to thank our young Master Karl for this pleasure. I think we shall have to promise him Bürgi's canopy bed after all and lay a certain doll in it for him. What do you think, Daniel Frymann?"

"And I am afraid," said Pfister, "that he is going to lose his bet and will have to buy my Swiss blood."

But Frymann suddenly frowned and said:

"A clever tongue alone isn't always rewarded with a wife! At least in my house a skilful hand has to go with it. Come, my friends, don't let us try to include in our jokes things that don't rightly belong there."

Karl and Hermine were blushing and looking away into the crowd with embarrassment. Just then came the boom of the cannon-shot that announced the recommencement of the shooting and for which a long line of marksmen were waiting, rifle in hand. Immediately their rifle-fire crackled all down the line; Karl rose from the table saying that he too now wanted to try his luck, and betook himself to the range.

"And at least I want to watch him even if I can't have him," cried Hermine jestingly, and followed him, accompanied by her friends.

But it happened that the women lost sight of one another in the crowd and at last Hermine was left alone with Karl and went with him faithfully from target to target. He

began at the extreme end where there was no crowd and, although he shot with no particular earnestness, made two or three hits in succession. Turning round to Hermine who stood behind him he said laughing:

"That's doing pretty well!" She laughed too, but only with her eyes, while her lips said earnestly:

"You must win a cup."

"I can't do that," answered Karl, "to get twenty-five numbers I should have to use at least fifty cartridges and I only have twenty-five with me."

"Oh," she said, "there's powder and lead enough for sale here."

"But I don't want to buy any more; that would make the cup a pretty expensive prize! Some fellows, to be sure, do spend more money on powder than the trophy is worth, but I'm not such a fool."

"You're very high-principled and economical," she said almost tenderly, "I like that. But it's the best fun of all to accomplish with a little just as much as the others with their elaborate preparations and terrible exertions. So pull yourself together and win with your twenty-five cartridges. If I were a marksman I'd make myself succeed."

"Never! Such a thing never occurs, you little goose!"

"That's because you are all only Sunday marksmen. Go ahead, begin and try it."

He shot again and got a number and then a second. Again he looked at Hermine and she laughed still more with her eyes and said still more earnestly:

"There, you see! It can be done, now go ahead."

He looked at her steadily, and could scarcely withdraw his gaze, for he had never seen her eyes look as they did now; there was a stern and tyrannical gleam in the smiling sweetness of her glance, two spirits spoke eloquently out of its radiance: one was her commanding will, but with that was fused the promise of reward and out of that fusion arose a new mysterious being. "Do my will, I have more to give than you suspect," said those eyes, and Karl gazed into them searchingly and eagerly until he and the girl understood each other, there, surrounded by the tumult and surge of the festival. When he had satisfied his eyes with this radiance, he

turned again, aimed calmly and scored once more. Now he himself began to feel that it was possible; but as people were beginning to gather about him, he went away and sought a quieter and emptier range, and Hermine followed him. There he again made several hits without wasting a shot; and so he began to handle his cartridges as carefully as gold coins, and Hermine accompanied every one with avaricious, shining eyes as it disappeared into the barrel; but each time, before Karl took his aim without haste or agitation, he looked into the beautiful face beside him. As soon as people began to notice his luck and collect round him, he went on to another range; nor did he stick the checks he received in his hat-band, but gave them to his companion to keep; she held the whole little pack and never did a marksman have a more beautiful number-bearer. Thus he actually did fulfill her wish and made such fortunate use of his twenty-five cartridges that not one of them struck outside the prescribed circle.

They counted over the checks and found this rare good fortune confirmed.

"I've done it once, but I'll never be able to again as long as I live," said Karl, "and it's you who are responsible, with your eyes. I am only wondering what all else you intend to accomplish with them!"

"Wait and see," she answered, and now her lips laughed too.

"Now go back to the party," he said, "and ask them to come and fetch me from the trophy-hall, so that I may have an escort, as there is no one else with me, or do you want to march with me?"

"I'd almost like to," said she, but hurried away nevertheless.

The old men were sitting deep in pleasant conversation; most of the crowd in the hall had changed but they stuck fast to their table and let life surge about them. Hermine went up to them laughing and cried:

"Karl wants you to come and get him; he's won a cup!"

"What! How's that?" they cried and rejoiced loudly; "so that's what he's up to?"

"Yes," said an acquaintance who had just come up, "and, moreover, he won the cup with twenty-five shots, that doesn't happen every day! I was watching the young couple and saw how they did it."

Master Frymann looked at his daughter in astonishment. "You didn't shoot too, did you? I hope not. Women sharpshooters are all right in general, but not in particular."

"Don't be alarmed," said Hermine, "I didn't shoot, I only ordered him to shoot straight."

Hediger, however, paled with wonder and satisfaction to think that he should have a son gifted with eloquence, and famous in the use of arms, who would go forth with deeds and actions from his obscure tailor-shop into the world. Inwardly he began to sing small, and decided that he would no longer try to act the guardian. But now they all started for the trophy-temple where they really found the young hero, standing beside the buglers, the shining cup already in his hand, waiting for them. And so to the tune of a merry march off they went with him to the festival hall to christen the cup, as the saying goes, and again their steps were short and firm, their fists were clenched and they looked triumphantly about them. Arrived again at their headquarters, Karl filled the cup, set it in the middle of the table and said,

"I herewith dedicate this cup to the Band of Seven, that it may never leave their banner."

"Accepted!" they shouted. The cup began to go the round and new merriment rejuvenated the old men, who had now been in good spirits since dawn. The evening sun streamed in under the countless beams of the hall and gilded thousands of faces already transfigured with pleasure, while the resounding tones of the orchestra filled the room. Hermine sat in the shadow of her father's broad shoulders, as modest and quiet, as if she couldn't count three. But golden lights from the sun, falling across the cup before her and flashing on its golden lining and the wine, played about her rosy and glowing face and danced with every movement of the wine when the old men in the heat of discussion pounded on the table; and then one could not tell whether she herself was smiling or only the playing lights. She was now so beautiful that young men, looking about the hall, soon discovered her.

Merry groups settled themselves near her in order to keep her in sight and people asked one another: "Where is she from? Who is the old man? Doesn't anyone know him?" "She's from St. Gallen; they say she's a Thurgovian," answered one. "No, all the people at that table are from Zurich," said another. Wherever she looked, merry young fellows raised their hats in respectful admiration and she smiled modestly and without affectation. But when a long procession of young men passed the table and all took off their hats she had to cast down her eyes, and still more when a handsome student from Berne suddenly appeared beside her, cap in hand, and with courteous audacity said that he had been sent by thirty friends who were sitting at the fourth table from there, to inform her, with her father's permission, that she was the most charming girl in the hall. In short, everyone did regular homage to her, the sails of the old men swelled with new triumph, and Karl's fame was almost obscured by Hermine's. But he too was to come to the front once more.

For a stir and a crush arose in the middle aisle caused by two cowherds from Entlibuch who were pushing their way through the throng. They were regular bumpkins with short pipes in their mouths, their Sunday jackets under their brawny arms, little straw hats on their big heads and shirts fastened together across their chests with silver buckles in the shape of hearts. The one who went ahead was a clodhopper of fifty and rather tipsy and unruly; for he wanted to try feats of strength with every man he saw and kept trying to hook his clumsy fingers into everything, at the same time blinking pleasantly, or at times challenging, with his little eyes. So his advance was everywhere marked by offense and confusion. Directly behind him, however, came the second, a still more uncouth customer of eighty, with a shock of short yellow curls, and he was the father of the fifty-year-old. He guided his precious son with an iron hand, without ever letting his pipe go out, by saying from time to time:

"Laddie, keep quiet! Orderly, laddie, orderly!" and at the same time pushing and pulling him in accordance with his words. So he steered him with able hand through the angry sea until, just as they reached the table of the Seven, a

dangerous stoppage occurred, as a group of peasants came up who wanted to call the quarrelsome fellow to account and attack him from both sides. Fearing that his laddie might do some fiendish damage, the father looked about for a place of refuge and saw the old men. "He'll be quiet among these old baldpates," he growled to himself, grasped his son with one fist in the small of his back and steered him in between the benches, while with the other he fanned the air behind him to keep off the irritated pursuers, for several of them had already been properly pinched, in all haste.

"With your permission, gentlemen," said the octogenarian to the younger old men, "let me sit down here a minute so that I can give my laddie another glass of wine. Then he will grow sleepy and be as quiet as a little lamb."

So he wedged himself into the party with his offspring, and the son really did look about him meekly and respectfully. But presently he said:

"I want to drink out of the little silver mug over there."

"Will you be quiet, or I'll knock the senses out of you before you can turn round," said his father. But when Hediger pushed the full cup towards him he said: "Well, then, if the gentlemen will allow it, take a drink, but don't guzzle it all."

"That's a lively youngster you've got there, my good man," said Frymann, "how old is he?"

"Oh," replied the father "around New Year's he'll be about fifty-two; at least he was screaming in his cradle in 1798 when the French came, drove away my cows and burnt my house. But because I took a couple of them and knocked their heads together, I had to fly, and my wife died of misery in the meantime. That's why I have to bring up my boy alone."

"Didn't you get a wife for him who could have helped you?"

"No, he's still too clumsy and wild; it won't do, he smashes everything to pieces."

In the meantime the youthful ne'er-do-well had drained the fragrant cup. He filled his pipe and looked round the circle blinking most happily and peacefully. Thus he discovered Hermine and the womanly beauty that radiated from her

suddenly rekindled ambition in his heart and the desire to show his strength. As his eye fell simultaneously on Karl who was sitting opposite him, he invitingly stretched out his crooked middle finger across the table.

"Stop that, Sonny! Has Satan got into you again?" cried his father wrathfully, and was about to take him by the collar, but Karl told him to let the other be and hooked his middle finger into that of the young bear and then they tried, each to pull the other over to him.

"If you hurt the young gentleman or sprain his finger," warned the old father, "I'll take you by the ears so that you'll feel it for three weeks."

The two hands now wavered for a considerable time over the centre of the table; Karl soon ceased laughing and grew crimson in the face, but at last he gradually drew the arm and shoulder of his opponent perceptibly towards his side of the table and with that the victory was won.

The man from Entlibuch looked at him quite bewildered and downcast, but not for long; his old father, now enraged at his defeat, boxed his ears, and much ashamed he looked at Hermine; then he suddenly began to cry and said, sobbingly:

"And now at least I want a wife!"

"Come, come," said his papa, "you're ready for bed now." He grasped him by the arm and marched him off.

After the departure of this odd pair, a silence fell on the old men and they wondered anew at Karl's deeds and achievements.

"That's entirely due to gymnastics," he said modestly; "they give you training, strength, and knack for such things and almost anyone can learn to do them who is not a born weakling."

"That is true," said Hediger, his father, and, after some reflection he continued enthusiastically: "Therefore let us forever and ever praise the new era which is again beginning to train men to be men and which commands not only the country gentleman and the mountain herdsman but the tailor's son as well to train his limbs and develop his body so that it can do something."

"That is true," said Frymann also awaking from medita-

tion, "and we too have all taken part in the struggle to bring on this new era. And to-day, as far as our old heads are concerned, we, with our little banner, are celebrating the final result, the command 'Cease firing!' and the rest we leave to the young ones. But now, no one has ever been able to say of us that we stuck obstinately to our errors and misunderstandings. On the contrary, we have always striven to keep our minds open to all that was rational, true, and beautiful; and so I herewith frankly and openly take back my declaration in regard to the children and invite you, Friend Kaspar, to do the same. For what better memorial of this day could we found, plant, and establish than a living line, springing directly from the loins of our friendship, a family whose children will preserve and transmit the principles and the unswerving faith of the Upright Seven? Well then, let Bürgi bring his canopy-bed that we may equip it. I will lay in it grace and womanly purity; you, strength, resolution and skill, and with that, forward with the waving green banner, because they are young. It shall be left to them and they shall keep it after we are gone. So do not resist longer, old Hediger, but give me your hand as my kinsman."

"Accepted," said Hediger solemnly, "but on the condition that you don't give the boy any money to spend on foolishness and heartless ostentation. For the devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour."

"Accepted," cried Frymann, and Hediger continued:

"Then I greet you as my kinsman, and the Swiss blood may be tapped for the wedding."

All the Seven now rose and Hermine's hand was laid in Karl's amid great jubilation.

"Good luck! There's a betrothal, that's the way it ought to be!" cried some of those sitting near, and at once a throng of people came up to clink glasses with the young couple. As if by arrangement the orchestra struck up, but Hermine managed to slip out of the crowd without letting go of Karl's hand, and he led her out of the hall to the festival grounds where already nocturnal silence reigned. They walked round the fortress of flags and as no one was near they stood still. The flags waved with animation and whispered together but they could not discover the little banner of friendship, for it

had disappeared in the folds of a huge neighbor and was well taken care of. But overhead in the starlight the Swiss flag snapped in its constant solitude and the sound of the bunting could plainly be heard. Hermine put her arms round her betrothed's neck, kissed him of her own accord, and said tenderly and with emotion:

"But now we must see that we order our life aright. May we live just as long as we are good and competent, and not a day longer!"

"Then I hope to live long, for I feel that life will be good with you," said Karl and kissed her again; "but what do you think now about who shall rule? Do you really want to hold the reins?"

"As tight as I can. In the meantime, law and a constitution will surely develop between us and it will be a good one whatever it is."

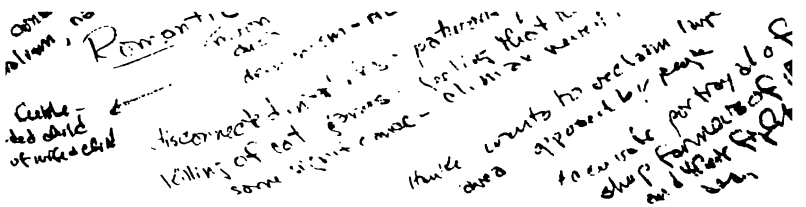
"And I will guarantee the constitution and claim the first chance to be godfather," suddenly rang out a strong bass voice.

Hermine craned her neck and seized Karl's hand; but he went nearer and saw one of the sentries of the Aargau sharpshooters standing in the shadow of a pillar. The metal on his equipment gleamed in the dark. Now the two young men recognized each other and the sentry was a tall, fine-looking fellow, the son of a peasant. Karl and Hermine sat down on the steps at his feet and chatted with him for a good half hour before they returned to their party.

THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE

BY
THEODOR STORM

TRANSLATED BY
MARGARETE MÜNSTERBERG



THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE

WHAT I am about to tell I learned nearly half a century ago in the house of my great-grandmother, old Madame Fedderson, widow of the senator, while I was sitting beside her armchair, busy reading a magazine bound in blue pasteboard—I don't remember whether it was a copy of the "Leipzig" or of "Pappes Hamburger Lesefrüchte." I still remember with a shudder how meanwhile the light hand of the past eighty-year-old woman glided tenderly over the hair of her great-grandson. She herself and her time are buried long ago. In vain have I searched for that magazine, and therefore I am even less able to vouch for the truth of the statements in it than I am to defend them if anyone should question them; but of so much I can assure anyone, that since that time they have never been forgotten, even though no outer incident has revived them in my memory.

It was in the third decade of our century, on an October afternoon—thus began the story-teller of that time—that I rode through a mighty storm along a North Frisian dike. For over an hour I had on my left the dreary marshland, already deserted by all the cattle; on my right, unpleasantly near me, the swamping waters of the North Sea. I saw nothing, however, but the yellowish-grey waves that beat against the dike unceasingly, as if they were roaring with rage, and that now and then bespattered me and my horse with dirty foam; behind them I could see only chaotic dusk which did not let me tell sky and earth apart, for even the half moon which now stood in the sky was most of the time covered by wandering clouds. It was ice cold; my clammy hands could scarcely hold the reins, and I did not wonder that the croaking and cackling crows and gulls were

always letting themselves be swept inland by the storm. Nightfall had begun, and already I could no longer discern the hoof of my horse with any certainty. I had met no human soul, heard nothing but the screaming of the birds when they almost grazed me and my faithful mare with their long wings, and the raging of the wind and water. I cannot deny that now and then I wished that I were in safe quarters.

It was the third day that this weather had lasted, and I had already allowed an especially dear relative to keep me longer than I should have done on his estate in one of the more northern districts. But to-day I could not stay longer. I had business in the city which was even now a few hours' ride to the south, and in spite of all the persuasions of my cousin and his kind wife, in spite of the Perinette and Grand Richard apples still to be tried, I had ridden away.

"Wait till you get to the sea," he had called after me from his house door. "You will turn back. Your room shall be kept for you."

And really, for a moment, when a black layer of clouds spread pitch-darkness round me and at the same time the howling squalls were trying to force me and my horse down from the dike, the thought shot through my head: "Don't be a fool! Turn back and stay with your friends in their warm nest." But then it occurred to me that the way back would be longer than the way to my destination; and so I trotted on, pulling the collar of my coat up over my ears.

But now something came toward me upon the dike; I heard nothing, but when the half moon shed its spare light, I believed that I could discern more and more clearly a dark figure, and soon, as it drew nearer, I saw that it sat on a horse, on a long-legged, haggard, white horse; a dark cloak was waving round its shoulders, and as it flew past me, two glowing eyes stared at me out of a pale face.

Who was that? What did that man want? And now it came to my mind that I had not heard the beating of hoofs or any panting of the horse; and yet horse and rider had ridden close by me!

Deep in thought over this I rode on, but I did not have much time to think, for straightway it flew past me again

from behind; it seemed as if the flying cloak had grazed me, as if the apparition, just as it had done the first time, had rushed by me without a sound. Then I saw it farther and farther away from me, and suddenly it seemed as if a shadow were gliding down at the inland side of the dike.

Somewhat hesitating, I rode on behind. When I had reached that place, hard by the "Koog," the land won from the sea by damming it in, I saw water gleam from a great "Wehl," as they call the breaks made into the land by the storm floods which remain as small but deep pools.

In spite of the protecting dike, the water was remarkably calm; hence the rider could not have troubled it. Besides, I saw nothing more of him. Something else I saw now, however, which I greeted with pleasure: before me, from out of the "Koog," a multitude of little scattered lights were glimmering up to me; they seemed to come from some of the rambling Frisian houses that lay isolated on more or less high mounds. But close in front of me, half way up the inland side of the dike lay a great house of this kind. On the south side, to the right of the house door, I saw all the windows illumined, and beyond, I perceived people and imagined that I could hear them in spite of the storm. My horse had of himself walked down to the road along the dike which led me up to the door of the house. I could easily see that it was a tavern, for in front of the windows I spied the so-called "ricks," beams resting on two posts with great iron rings for hitching the cattle and horses that stopped there.

I tied my horse to one of these and left him to the servant who met me as I entered the hall.

"Is a meeting going on here?" I asked him, for now a noise of voices and clicking glasses rose clearly from the room beyond the door.

"Aye, something of the sort," the servant replied in Plattdeutsch, and later I learned that this dialect had been in full swing here, as well as the Frisian, for over a hundred years; "the dikemaster and the overseers and the other landholders! That's on account of the high water!"

When I entered, I saw about a dozen men sitting round a table that extended beneath the windows; a punch bowl

stood upon it; and a particularly stately man seemed to dominate the party.

I bowed and asked if I might sit down with them, a favor which was readily granted.

"You had better keep watch here!" I said, turning to this man; "the weather outside is bad; there will be hard times for the dikes!"

"Surely," he replied, "but we here on the east side believe we are out of danger. Only over there on the other side it isn't safe; the dikes there are mostly made more after old patterns; our chief dike was made in the last century. We got chilly outside a while ago; and you," he added, "probably had the same experience. But we have to hold out a few hours longer here; we have reliable people outside, who report to us." And before I could give my order to the host, a steaming glass was pushed in front of me.

I soon found out that my pleasant neighbour was the dikemaster; we entered into conversation, and I began to tell him about my strange encounter on the dike. He grew attentive, and I noticed suddenly that all talk round about was silenced.

"The rider on the white horse," cried one of the company and a movement of fright stirred the others.

The dikemaster had risen.

"You don't need to be afraid," he spoke across the table, "that isn't meant for us only; in the year '17 it was meant for them too; may they be ready for the worst!"

Now a horror came over me.

"Pardon me!" I said. "What about this rider on the white horse?"

Apart from the others, behind the stove, a small, haggard man in a little worn black coat sat somewhat bent over; one of his shoulders seemed a little deformed. He had not taken part with a single word in the conversation of the others, but his eyes, fringed as they were with dark lashes, although the scanty hair on his head was grey, showed clearly that he was not sitting there to sleep.

Toward him the dikemaster pointed:

"Our schoolmaster," he said, raising his voice, "will be the one among us who can tell you that best—to be sure, only

in his way, and not quite as accurately as my old housekeeper at home, Antje Vollmans, would manage to tell it."

"You are joking, dikemaster!" the somewhat feeble voice of the schoolmaster rose from behind the stove, "if you want to compare me to your silly dragon!"

"Yes, that's all right, schoolmaster!" replied the other, "but stories of that kind are supposed to be kept safest with dragons."

"Indeed!" said the little man, "in this we are not quite of the same opinion." And a superior smile flitted over his delicate face.

"You see," the dikemaster whispered in my ear, "he is still a little proud; in his youth he once studied theology and it was only because of an unhappy courtship that he stayed hanging about his home as schoolmaster."

The schoolmaster had meanwhile come forward from his corner by the stove and had sat down beside me at the long table.

"Come on! Tell the story, schoolmaster," cried some of the younger members of the party.

"Yes, indeed," said the old man, turning toward me. "I will gladly oblige you; but there is a good deal of superstition mixed in with it, and it is quite a feat to tell the story without it."

"I must beg you not to leave the superstition out," I replied. "You can trust me to sift the chaff from the wheat by myself!"

The old man looked at me with an appreciative smile.

Well, he said, in the middle of the last century, or rather, to be more exact, before and after the middle of that century, there was a dikemaster here who knew more about dikes and sluices than peasants and landowners usually do. But I suppose it was nevertheless not quite enough, for he had read little of what learned specialists had written about it; his knowledge, though he began in childhood, he had thought out all by himself. I dare say you have heard, sir, that the Frisians are good at arithmetic, and perhaps you have heard tell of our Hans Mommsen from Fahntoft, who was a peasant and yet could make chronometers, telescopes, and organs. Well, the father of this man who later became

dikemaster was made out of this same stuff—to be sure, only a little. He had a few fens, where he planted turnips and beans and kept a cow grazing; once in a while in the fall and spring he also surveyed land, and in winter, when the northwest wind blew outside and shook his shutters, he sat in his room to scratch and prick with his instruments. The boy usually would sit by and look away from his primer or Bible to watch his father measure and calculate, and would thrust his hand into his blond hair. And one evening he asked the old man why something that he had written down had to be just so and could not be something different, and stated his own opinion about it. But his father, who did not know how to answer this, shook his head and said:

"That I cannot tell you; anyway it is so, and you are mistaken. If you want to know more, search for a book tomorrow in a box in our attic; someone whose name is Euclid has written it; that will tell you."

The next day the boy had run up to the attic and soon had found the book, for there were not many books in the house anyway, but his father laughed when he laid it in front of him on the table. It was a Dutch Euclid, and Dutch, although it was half German, neither of them understood.

"Yes, yes," he said, "this book belonged to my father; he understood it; is there no German Euclid up there?"

The boy, who spoke little, looked at his father quietly and said only: "May I keep it? There isn't any German one."

And when the old man nodded, he showed him a second half-torn little book.

"That too?" he asked again.

"Take them both!" said Tede Haien; "they won't be of much use to you."

But the second book was a little Dutch grammar, and as the winter was not over for a long while, by the time the gooseberries bloomed again in the garden it had helped the boy so far that he could almost entirely understand his Euclid, which at that time was much in vogue.

I know perfectly well, sir, the story teller interrupted himself, that this same incident is also told of Hans Mommsen, but before his birth our people here have told the same of Hauke Haien—that was the name of the boy. You know

well enough that as soon as a greater man has come, everything is heaped on him that his predecessor has done before him, either seriously or in fun.

When the old man saw that the boy had no sense for cows or sheep and scarcely noticed when the beans were in bloom, which is the joy of every marshman, and when he considered that his little place might be kept up by a farmer and a boy, but not by a half-scholar and a hired man, inasmuch as he himself had not been over-prosperous, he sent his big boy to the dike, where he had to cart earth from Easter until Martinmas. "That will cure him of his Euclid," he said to himself.

And the boy carted; but his Euclid he always had with him in his pocket, and when the workmen ate their breakfast or lunch, he sat on his upturned wheelbarrow with the book in his hand. In autumn, when the tide rose higher and sometimes work had to be stopped, he did not go home with the others, but stayed and sat with his hands clasped over his knees on the seaward slope of the dike, and for hours watched the sombre waves of the North Sea beat always higher and higher against the grass-grown scar of the dike. Not until the water washed over his feet and the foam sprayed his face did he move a few feet higher, only to stay and sit on. He did not hear the splash of the water, or the scream of the gulls or strand birds that flew round him and almost grazed him with their wings, flashing their black eyes at his own; nor did he see how night spread over the wide wilderness of water. The only thing he saw was the edge of the surf, which at high tide was again and again hitting the same place with hard blows and before his very eyes washing away the grassy scar of the steep dike.

After staring a long time, he would nod his head slowly and, without looking up, draw a curved line in the air, as if he could in this way give the dike a gentler slope. When it grew so dark that all earthly things vanished from his sight and only the surf roared in his ears, then he got up and marched home half drenched.

One night when he came in this state into the room where his father was polishing his surveying instruments, the latter started. "What have you been doing out there?" he cried.

"You might have drowned; the waters are biting into the dike to-day."

Hauke looked at him stubbornly.

"Don't you hear me? I say, you might have drowned!"

"Yes," said Hauke, "but I'm not drowned!"

"No," the old man answered after a while and looked into his face absently—"not this time."

"But," Hauke returned, "our dikes aren't worth anything."

"What's that, boy?"

"The dikes, I say."

"What about the dikes?"

"They're no good, father," replied Hauke.

The old man laughed in his face. "What's the matter with you, boy? I suppose you are the prodigy from Lübeck."

But the boy would not be put down. "The waterside is too steep," he said; "if it happens some day as it has happened before, we can drown here behind the dike too."

The old man pulled his tobacco out of his pocket, twisted off a piece and pushed it behind his teeth. "And how many loads have you pushed to-day?" he asked angrily, for he saw that the boy's work on the dike had not been able to chase away his brainwork.

"I don't know, father," said the boy; "about as many as the others did, or perhaps half a dozen more; but—the dikes have got to be changed!"

"Well," said the old man with a short laugh, "perhaps you can manage to be made dikemaster; then you can change them."

"Yes, father," replied the boy.

The old man looked at him and swallowed a few times, then he walked out of the door. He did not know what to say to the boy.

Even when, at the end of October, the work on the dike was over, his walk northward to the farm was the best entertainment for Hauke Haien. He looked forward to All Saints' Day, the time when the equinoctial storms were wont to rage—a day on which we say that Friesland has a good right to mourn—just as children nowadays look forward to Christmas. When an early flood was coming, one could be

sure that in spite of storm and bad weather, he would be lying all alone far out on the dike; and when the gulls chattered, when the waters pounded against the dike and as they rolled back swept big pieces of the grass cover with them into the sea, then one could have heard Hauke's furious laughter.

"You aren't good for anything!" he cried out into the noise. "Just as the people are no good!" And at last, often in darkness, he trotted home from the wide water along the dike, until his tall figure had reached the low door under his father's thatch roof and slipped into the little room.

Sometimes he had brought home a handful of clay; then he sat down beside the old man, who now humoured him, and by the light of the thin tallow candle he kneaded all sorts of dike models, laid them in a flat dish with water and tried to imitate the washing away by the waves; or he took his slate and drew the profiles of the dikes toward the waterside as he thought they ought to be.

He had no idea of keeping up intercourse with his schoolmates; it seemed, too, as if they did not care for this dreamer. When winter had come again and the frost had appeared, he wandered still farther out on the dike to points he had never reached before, until the boundless ice-covered sand flats lay before him.

During the continuous frost in February, dead bodies were found washed ashore; they had lain on the frozen sand flats by the open sea. A young woman who had been present when they had taken the bodies into the village, stood talking fluently with old Haien.

"Don't you believe that they looked like people!" she cried; "no, like sea devils! Heads as big as this," and she touched together the tips of her outspread and outstretched hands, "coal-black and shiny, like newly baked bread! And the crabs had nibbled them, and the children screamed when they saw them." For old Haien this was nothing new.

"I suppose they have floated in the water since November!" he said indifferently.

Hauke stood by in silence, but as soon as he could, he sneaked out on the dike; nobody knew whether he wanted to look for more dead, or if he was drawn to the places now deserted by the horror that still clung to them. He ran on

and on, until he stood alone in the solitary waste, where only the winds blew over the dike where there was nothing but the wailing voices of the great birds that shot by swiftly. To his left was the wide empty marshland, on the other side the endless beach with its sand flats now glistening with ice; it seemed as if the whole world lay in a white death.

Hauke remained standing on the dike, and his sharp eyes gazed far away. There was no sign of the dead; but when the invisible streams on the sand flats found their way beneath the ice, it rose and sank in streamlike lines.

He ran home, but on one of the next nights he was out there again. In places the ice had now split; smoke-clouds seemed to rise out of the cracks, and over the whole sand-stretch a net of steam and mist seemed to be spun, which at evening mingled strangely with the twilight. Hauke stared at it with fixed eyes, for in the mist dark figures were walking up and down that seemed to him as big as human beings. Far off he saw them promenade back and forth by the steaming fissures, dignified, but with strange, frightening gestures, with long necks and noses. All at once, they began to jump up and down like fools, uncannily, the big ones over the little ones, the little ones over the big ones—then they spread out and lost all shape.

"What do they want? Are they ghosts of the drowned?" thought Hauke. "Hallo!" he screamed out aloud into the night; but they did not heed his cry and kept on with their strange antics.

Then the terrible Norwegian sea spectres came to his mind, that an old captain had once told him about, who bore stubby bunches of sea grass on their necks instead of heads. He did not run away, however, but dug the heels of his boots faster into the clay of the dike and rigidly watched the farcical riot that was kept up before his eyes in the falling dusk. "Are you here in our parts too?" he said in a hard voice. "You shall not chase *me* away!"

Not until darkness covered all things did he walk home with stiff, slow steps. But behind him he seemed to hear the rustling of wings and resounding screams. He did not look round, neither did he walk faster, and it was late when he came home. Yet he is said to have told neither his father

nor anyone else about it. But many years after he took his feeble-minded little girl, with whom the Lord later had burdened him, out on the dike with him at the same time of day and year, and the same riot is said to have appeared then out on the sand flats. But he told her not to be afraid, that these things were only the herons and crows, that seemed so big and horrible, and that they were getting fish out of the open cracks.

God knows, the schoolmaster interrupted himself, there are all sorts of things on earth that could confuse a Christian heart, but Hauke was neither a fool nor a blockhead.

As I made no response, he wanted to go on. But among the other guests, who till now had listened without making a sound, only filling the low room more and more thickly with tobacco smoke, there arose a sudden stir. First one, then another, then all turned toward the window. Outside, as one could see through the uncurtained glass, the storm was driving the clouds, and light and dark were chasing one another; but it seemed to me too as if I had seen the haggard rider whiz by on his white horse.

"Wait a little, schoolmaster," said the dikemaster in a low voice.

"You don't need to be afraid, dikemaster," laughed the little narrator. "I have not slandered him and have no reason to do so"—and he looked up at him with with his small clever eyes.

"All right," said the other. "Let your glass be filled again!" And when that had been done and the listeners, most of them with rather anxious faces, had turned to him again, he went on with his story:

Living thus by himself and liking best to associate only with sand and water and with scenes of solitude, Hauke grew into a long lean fellow. It was a year after his confirmation that his life was suddenly changed, and this came about through the old white Angora cat which old Trin Jans's son, who later perished at sea, had brought her on his return from a voyage to Spain. Trin lived a good way out on the dike in a little hut, and when the old woman did her chores in the house, this monster of a cat used to sit in front of the house door and blink into the summer day and at the

peewits that flew past. When Hauke went by, the cat mewed at him and Hauke nodded; both knew how each felt toward the other.

Now it was spring and Hauke, as he was accustomed to do, often lay out on the dike, already farther out near the water, between beach pinks and the fragrant sea-wormwood, and let the strong sun shine on him. He had gathered his pockets full of pebbles up on the higher land the day before, and when at low tide the sand flats were laid bare and the little gay strand snipes whisked across them screaming, he quickly pulled out a stone and threw it after the birds. He had practiced this from earliest childhood on, and usually one of the birds remained lying on the ground; but often it was impossible to get at it. Hauke had sometimes thought of taking the cat with him and training him as a retriever. But there were hard places here and there on the sand; in that case he ran and got his prey himself. On his way back, if the cat was still sitting in front of the house door, the animal would utter piercing cries of uncontrollable greed until Hauke threw him one of the birds he had killed.

To-day when he walked home, carrying his jacket on his shoulder, he was taking home only one unknown bird, but that seemed to have wings of gay silk and metal; and the cat mewed as usual when he saw him coming. But this time Hauke did not want to give up his prey—it may have been an ice bird—and he paid no attention to the greed of the animal. "Wait your turn!" he called to him. "To-day for me, to-morrow for you; this is no food for a cat!"

As the cat came carefully sneaking along, Hauke stood and looked at it: the bird was hanging from his hand, and the cat stood still with its paw raised. But it seemed that the young man did not know his cat friend too well, for, while he had turned his back on it and was just going on his way, he felt that with a sudden jerk his booty was torn from him, and at the same time a sharp claw cut into his flesh. A rage like that of a beast of prey shot into the young man's blood; wildly he stretched out his arm and in a flash had clutched the robber by his neck. With his fist he held the powerful animal high up and choked it until its eyes bulged out among its rough hairs, not heeding that the strong hind paws were

tearing his flesh. "Hello!" he shouted, and clutched him still more tightly; "let's see which of us two can stand it the longest!"

Suddenly the hind legs of the big cat fell languidly down, and Hauke walked back a few steps and threw it against the hut of the old woman. As it did not stir, he turned round and continued his way home.

But the Angora cat was the only treasure of her mistress; he was her companion and the only thing that her son, the sailor, had left her after he had met with sudden death here on the coast when he had wanted to help his mother by fishing in the storm. Hauke had scarcely walked on a hundred steps, while he caught the blood from his wounds on a cloth, when he heard a shrill howling and screaming from the hut. He turned round and, in front of it, saw the old woman lying on the ground; her grey hair was flying in the wind round her red head scarf.

"Dead!" she cried; "dead!" and raised her lean arm threateningly against him: "A curse on you! You have killed her, you good for nothing vagabond; you weren't good enough to brush her tail!" She threw herself upon the animal and with her apron she tenderly wiped off the blood that was still running from its nose and mouth; then she began her screaming again.

"When will you be done?" Hauke cried to her. "Then let me tell you, I'll get you a cat that will be satisfied with the blood of mice and rats!"

Then he went on his way, apparently no longer concerned with anything. But the dead cat must have caused some confusion in his head, for when he came to the village, he passed by his father's house and the others and walked on a good distance toward the south on the dike toward the city.

Meanwhile Trin Jans, too, wandered on the dike in the same direction. In her arms she bore a burden wrapped in an old blue checkered pillowcase, and clasped it carefully as if it were a child; her grey hair fluttered in the light spring wind. "What are you lugging there, Trina?" asked a peasant who met her. "More than your house and farm," replied the old woman, and walked on eagerly. When she came near the

house of old Haien, which lay below, she walked down to the houses along the "akt," as we call the cattle and foot paths that lead slantingly up and down the side of the dike.

Old Tede Haien was just standing in front of his door, looking at the weather. "Well, Trin!" he said, when she stood panting in front of him and dug her crutch into the ground, "What are you bringing us in your bag?"

"First let me into the room, Tede Haien! Then you shall see!" and her eyes looked at him with a strange gleam.

"Well, come along!" said the old man. What did he care about the eyes of the stupid woman!

When both had entered, she went on: "Take that old tobacco box and those writing things from the table. What do you always have to write for, anyway? All right; and now wipe it clean!"

And the old man, who was almost growing curious, did everything just as she said. Then she took the blue pillow-case at both ends and emptied the carcass of the big cat out on the table. "There she is!" she cried; "your Hauke has killed her!" Thereupon she began to cry bitterly; she stroked the thick fur of the dead animal, laid its paws together, bent her long nose over its head and whispered incomprehensible words of tenderness into its ears.

Tede Haien watched this. "Is that so," he said; "Hauke has killed her?"

He did not know what to do with the howling woman.

She nodded at him grimly. "Yes, yes, God knows, that's what he has done," and she wiped the tears from her eyes with her hand, crippled by rheumatism. "No child, no live thing any more!" she complained. "And you know yourself how it is after All Saints' Day, when we old people feel our legs shiver at night in bed, and instead of sleeping we hear the northwest wind rattle against the shutters. I don't like to hear it. Tede Haien, it comes from where my boy sank to death in the quicksand!"

Tede Haien nodded, and the old woman stroked the fur of her dead cat. "But this one here," she began again, "when I would sit by my spinning-wheel, there she would sit with me and spin too and look at me with her green eyes! And when I grew cold and crept into my bed—then it wasn't

long before she jumped up to me and lay down on my chilly legs, and we both slept as warmly together as if I still had my young sweetheart in bed!

The old woman, as if she were waiting for his assent to this remembrance, looked with her gleaming eyes at the old man standing beside her at the table. . Tede Haien, however, said thoughtfully: "I know a way out for you, Trin Jans," and he went to his strong box and took a silver coin out of the drawer. "You say that Hauke has robbed your animal of life, and I know you don't lie; but here is a crown piece from the time of Christian IV; go and buy a tanned lambskin with it for your cold legs! And when our cat has kittens, you may pick out the biggest of them; both together, I suppose, will make up for an Angora cat feeble from old age! Take your beast and, if you want to, take it to the tanner in town, but keep your mouth shut and don't tell that it has lain on my honest table."

During this speech the woman had already snatched the crown and stowed it away in a little bag that she carried under her skirts, then she tucked the cat back into the pillowcase, wiped the bloodstains from the table with her apron, and stalked out of the door. "Don't you forget the young cat!" she called back.

After a while, when old Haien was walking up and down in the narrow little room, Hauke stepped in and tossed his bright bird on to the table. But when he saw the still recognizable bloodstain on the clean white top, he asked as if by the way: "What's that?"

His father stood still. "That's blood that you have spilled!"

The young man flushed hotly. "Why, has Trin Jans been here with her cat?"

The old man nodded: "Why did you kill it?"

Hauke uncovered his bleeding arm. "That's why," he said. "She had torn my bird away from me!"

Thereupon the old man said nothing. For a time he began to walk up and down, then he stood still in front of the young man and looked at him for a while almost absently.

"This affair with the cat I have made all right," he said, "but look, Hauke, this place is too small; two people can't stay on it—it is time you got a job!"

"Yes, father," replied Hauke; "I have been thinking something of the sort myself."

"Why?" asked the old man.

"Well, one gets wild inside unless one can let it out on a decent piece of work!"

"Is that so?" said the old man, "and that's why you have killed the Angora cat? That might easily lead to something worse!"

"You may be right, father, but the dikemaster has discharged his farmhand; I could do that work all right!"

The old man began to walk up and down, and meanwhile spat out the black tobacco. "The dikemaster is a blockhead, as stupid as a goose! He is dikemaster only because his father and grandfather have been the same, and on account of his twenty-nine fens. Round Martinmas, when the dike and sluice bills have to be settled, then he feeds the schoolmaster on roast goose and mead and wheat buns, and sits by and nods while the other man runs down the columns of figures with his pen, and says: 'Yes, yes, schoolmaster, God reward you! How finely you calculate!' But when the schoolmaster can't or won't, then he has to go at it himself and sits scribbling and striking out again, his big stupid head growing red and hot, his eyes bulging out like glass balls, as if his little bit of sense wanted to get out that way."

The young man stood up straight in front of his father and marveled at his talking; he had never heard him speak like that. "Yes, God knows," he said, "no doubt he is stupid, but his daughter Elke, she can calculate!"

The old man looked at him sharply.

"Hallo, Hauke," he exclaimed "what do you know about Elke Volkerts?"

"Nothing, father; only the schoolmaster has told me?"

The old man made no reply; he only pushed his piece of tobacco thoughtfully from one cheek into the other. "And you think," he said, "that you can help in the counting there too."

"Oh, yes, father, that would work all right," the son replied, and there was a serious twitching about his mouth.

The old man shook his head: "Well, go if you like; go and try your luck!"

"Thanks, father!" said Hauke, and climbed up to his sleeping place in the garret. There he sat down on the edge of the bed and pondered why his father had shouted at him so when he had mentioned Elke Volkerts. To be sure, he knew the slender, eighteen-year-old girl with the tanned, narrow face and the dark eyebrows that ran into each other over the stubborn eyes and the slender nose; but he had scarcely spoken a word to her. Now, if he should go to old Tede Volkerts, he would look at her more and see what there was about the girl. Right off he wanted to go, so that no one else could snatch the position away from him—it was now scarcely evening. And so he put on his Sunday coat and his best boots and started out in good spirits.

The long rambling house of the dikemaster was visible from afar because of the high mound on which it stood, and especially because of the highest tree in the village, a mighty ash. The grandfather of the present dikemaster, the first of the line, had in his youth planted an ash to the east of the house door; but the first two had died, and so he had planted a third on his wedding morning, which was still murmuring as if of old times in the increasing wind with its crown of foliage that was growing mightier and mightier.

When, after a while, tall, lank Hauke climbed up the hill which was planted on both sides with beets and cabbage, he saw the daughter of the owner standing beside the low house door. One of her somewhat thin arms was hanging down languidly, the other seemed to be grasping behind her back at one of the iron rings which were fastened to the wall on either side of the door, so that anyone who rode to the house could use them to hitch his horse. From there the young girl seemed to be gazing over the dike at the sea, where on this calm evening the sun was just sinking into the water and at the same time gilding the dark-skinned maiden with its last golden glow.

Hauke climbed up the hill a little more slowly, and thought to himself: "She doesn't look so dull this way!" Then he was at the top. "Good evening to you!" he said, stepping up to her. "What are you looking at with your big eyes, Miss Elke?"

"I'm looking," she replied, "at something that goes on here every night, but can't be seen here every night." She let the

ring drop from her hand, so that it fell against the wall with a clang. "What do you want, Hauke Haien?" she asked.

"Something that I hope you don't mind," he said. "Your father has just discharged his hired man; so I thought I would take a job with you."

She glanced at him, up and down: "You are still rather lanky, Hauke!" she said, "but two steady eyes serve us better than two steady arms!" At the same time she looked at him almost sombrely, but Hauke bravely withstood her gaze. "Come on, then," she continued. "The master is in his room; let's go inside."

The next day Tede Haien stepped with his son into the spacious room of the dikemaster. The walls were covered with glazed tiles on which the visitor could enjoy here a ship with sails unfurled or an angler on the shore, there a cow that lay chewing in front of a peasant's house. This durable wall-covering was interrupted by an alcove-bed with doors now closed, and a cupboard which showed all kinds of china and silver dishes through glass doors. Beside the door to the "best room" a Dutch clock was set into the wall behind a pane of glass.

The stout, somewhat apoplectic master of the house sat at the end of the well-scrubbed, shining table in an armchair with a bright-coloured cushion. He had folded his hands across his stomach, and was staring contentedly with his round eyes at the skeleton of a fat duck; knife and fork were resting in front of him on his plate.

"Good day, dikemaster!" said Haien, and the gentleman thus addressed slowly turned his head and eyes toward him.

"You here, Tede?" he replied, and the devoured fat duck had left its mark on his voice. "Sit down; it is quite a walk from your place over here!"

"I have come, dikemaster," said Tede Haien, while he sat down opposite the other in a corner on the bench that ran along the wall. "You have had trouble with your hired man and have agreed with my boy to put him in his place!"

The dikemaster nodded: "Yes, yes, Tede; but—what do you mean by trouble? We people of the marshes, thank goodness, have something to take against troubles!"—and he took the knife before him and patted the skeleton of the poor

duck almost affectionately. "This was my pet bird," he added laughing smugly; "he fed out of my hand!"

"I thought," said old Haien, not hearing the last remark, "the boy had done harm in your stable."

"Harm? Yes, Tede; surely harm enough! That fat clown hadn't watered the calves; but he lay drunk on the hayloft, and the beasts bellowed all night with thirst, so that I had to make up my lost sleep till noon; that's not the way a farm can go on!"

"No, dikemaster; but there is no danger of that happening with my boy."

Hauke stood, his hands in his pockets, by the door-post, and had thrown back his head and was studying the window frames opposite him.

The dikemaster had raised his eyes and nodded toward him: "No, no, Tede,"—and now he nodded at the old man too; "your Hauke won't disturb my night's rest; the schoolmaster has told me before that he would rather sit with his slate and do arithmetic than with a glass of whiskey."

Hauke did not hear this encouragement, for Elke had stepped into the room and with her light hand took out the remnants from the table, meanwhile glancing at him carelessly with her dark eyes. Then his glances fell on her too. "By my faith," he said to himself, "she doesn't look so dull now either!"

The girl had left the room. "You know, Tede," the dikemaster began again, "the Lord has not granted me a son!"

"Yes, dikemaster, but don't let that worry you," replied the other, "for they say that in the third generation the brains of a family run out; your grandfather, we all remember, was a man who protected the land!"

The dikemaster, after some pondering, looked quite puzzled: "How do you mean, Tede Haien?" he said and sat up in his armchair; "I am in the third generation myself!"

"Oh, indeed! Never mind, dikemaster; that's just what people say!" And the lean Tede Haien looked at the old dignitary with rather mischievous eyes.

The latter, however, spoke unconcerned: "You mustn't let old women get nonsense like that into your head, Tede Haien; you don't know my daughter yet—she can calculate

three times better than I can! I only wanted to say, your Hauke will be able to make some profit outside of his field work in my room with pen and pencil, and that will do him no harm."

"Yes, yes, dikemaster, he can do that; there you are perfectly right;" said old Haien and then began to demand some privileges with the contract which his son had not thought of the night before. For instance, the latter should receive, besides his linen shirts, eight pair of woollen stockings in addition to his wages; also he wanted to have his son's help at his own work for eight days in spring—and more of the sort. But the dikemaster agreed to everything; Hauke Haien appeared to him just the right servant.

"Well, God help you, my boy," said the old man, when they had just left the house, "if that man is to make the world clear to you!"

But Hauke replied calmly: "Never mind, father; everything will turn out all right."

Hauke had not been wrong in his judgment. The world, or what the world meant to him, grew clearer to his mind, the longer he stayed in this house—perhaps all the more, the less he was helped by a wiser insight and the more he had to depend on his own powers with which he had from the beginning helped himself. There was someone in the house, however, whom he did not seem to suit; that was Ole Peters, the head man, a good worker and a great talker. The former lazy and stupid but stocky hired man had been more to his liking, whose back he could load calmly with a barrel of oats and whom he could knock about to his heart's content. Hauke, who was still more silent, but who surpassed him mentally, he could not treat in the same way; Hauke had too strange a way of looking at him. Nevertheless he managed to pick out tasks which might have been dangerous for the young man's yet undeveloped body; and when the head man would say: "You ought to have seen fat Nick, he could do it without any trouble at all," then Hauke would work with all his might and finish the task, although with difficulty. It was lucky for him that Elke usually could hinder this, either by herself or through her father. One may ask what it is that binds people who are complete strangers to each other; per-

haps—well, they were both born arithmeticians, and the girl could not bear to see her comrade ruined by rough work.

The conflict between head man and second man did not grow less when after Martinmas the different dike bills came in for revision.

It happened on a May evening, but the weather was like November; inside the house one could hear the surf roar outside from behind the dike.

"Hey, Hauke," said the master of the house, "come in; now is your chance to show if you can do arithmetic!"

"Master," Hauke replied; "I'm supposed to feed the young cattle first."

"Elke!" called the dikemaster; "where are you, Elke? Go and tell Ole to feed the young cattle; I want Hauke to calculate!"

So Elke hurried into the stable and gave the order to the head man who was just busy hanging the harness used during the day back in place.

Ole Peters whipped the post beside which he had been busying himself with a bridle, as if he wanted to beat it to pieces: "The devil take that cursed scribbler!"

She heard these words even before she had closed the stable door again.

"Well?" asked the old man, as she stepped into the room.

"Ole was willing to do it," said his daughter, biting her lips a little, and sat down opposite Hauke on one of the roughly carved chairs which in those days were still made at home on winter evenings. Out of a drawer she had taken a white stocking with a red bird pattern on it, which she was now knitting; the long-legged creatures might have represented herons or storks. Hauke sat opposite her, deep in his arithmetic; the dikemaster himself rested in his armchair and blinked sleepily at Hauke's pen. On the table, as always in the house of the dikemaster, two tallow candles were burning, and behind the windows with their leaden frames the shutters were closed and fastened from within; now the wind could bang against them as hard as it liked. Once in a while Hauke raised his head and glanced for a moment at the bird stockings or at the narrow, calm face of the girl.

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Suddenly from the armchair there rose a loud snore, and a glance and smile flew back and forth between the two young people; gradually the breathing grew more quiet, and one could easily talk a little—only Hauke did not know about what.

But when she raised her knitting and the birds appeared in their whole length, he whispered across the table: "Where have you learned that, Elke?"

"Learned what?" the girl returned.

"This bird knitting?" said Hauke.

"This? From Trin Jans out there on the dike; she can do all sorts of things. She was servant here to my grandfather a long time ago."

"At that time I don't suppose you were born?" said Hauke.

"I think not; but she has often come to the house since then."

"Does she like birds?" asked Hauke; "I thought only cats were for her."

Elke shook her head: "Why, she raises ducks and sells them; but last spring, when you had killed her Angora cat, the rats got into the pen at the back of the house and made mischief; now she wants to build herself another in front of the house."

"Is that so?" said Hauke and whistled low through his teeth, "that's why she dragged mud and stones from the upper land. But then she will get on to the inland road; has she a grant?"

"I don't know," said Elke. But he had spoken the last word so loud that the dikemaster started out of his slumber.

"What grant?" he asked and looked almost wildly from one to the other. "What about the grant?"

But when Hauke had explained the matter to him, he slapped the young man's shoulder, laughing: "Oh, well, the inland road is broad enough; God help the dikemaster if he has to worry about duck pens!"

It weighed on Hauke's heart that he should have delivered the old woman and her ducks over to the rats, but he allowed himself to be quieted by this objection. "But, master," he began again, "it might be good for some people to be prodded a little, and if you don't want to go after them yourself, why

don't you prod the overseers who ought to look out for order on the dike?"

"How—what is the boy saying?" and the dikemaster sat up straight, and Elke let her fancy stocking sink down and turned an ear toward Hauke.

"Yes, master," Hauke went on, "you have already gone round on your spring inspection; but just the same Peter Jansen hasn't weeded his lot to this day; and in summer the goldfinches will play round the red thistles as gaily as ever. And near by—I don't know to whom it belongs—there is a hole like a cradle on the outer side of the dike; when the weather is good it is always full of little children that roll in it; but—God save us from high water!"

The eyes of the old dikemaster had grown bigger and bigger.

"And then—" said Hauke again.

"Then what more, boy?" asked the dikemaster; "haven't you finished yet?" and it seemed as if he had already had too much of his second man's speech.

"Yes; then, master," Hauke went on; "you know that fat Vollina, the daughter of the overseer Harder, who always fetches her father's horse from the fen—well, as soon as she sits with her round legs on the old yellow mare—Get up!—why, then every time she goes diagonally up the slope of the dike!"

Hauke did not notice until now that Elke had fixed her intelligent eyes on him and was gently shaking her head.

He was silent, but a bang on the table from the old man's fist thundered in his ears. "Confound it!" he cried, and Hauke was almost frightened by the bear's voice that suddenly broke out: "to the fens! Note down that fat creature in the fens, Hauke! That girl caught three of my young ducks last summer! Yes, yes, put it down," he repeated, when Hauke hesitated; "I even believe there were four!"

"Oh, father," said Elke, "wasn't it an otter that took the ducks?"

"A big otter!" cried the old man, panting; I guess I can tell the fat Vollina and an otter apart! No, no, four ducks, Hauke—but as for the rest of what you have been chattering —last spring the dikemaster general and I, after we had

breakfasted together at my house, drove by your weeds and your cradle-hole and yet couldn't see anything. But you two," and he nodded a few times significantly at Hauke and his daughter, "you can thank God that you are no dike-master! Two eyes are all one has, and one is supposed to look with a hundred. Take the bills for the straw coverings, Hauke, and look them over; those rascals do keep their accounts in such a shiftless way!"

Then he leaned back in his chair again, moved his heavy body a few times and soon gave himself over to care-free slumber.

The same thing was repeated on many an evening. Hauke had sharp eyes, and when they sat together, he did not neglect to call the old man's attention to one or the other violation or omission in dike matters, and as the latter could not always keep his eyes closed, unawares the management acquired a greater efficiency and those who in other times had gone on sinning in their old, careless ways and now, as it were, unexpectedly felt their mischievous or lazy fingers slapped, looked round indignantly and with astonishment to see whence these slaps had come. And Ole, the head man, did not hesitate to spread the information and in this way to rouse indignation among these people against Hauke and his father, who had to bear part of the guilt. The others, however, who were not affected or who were not concerned with the matter, laughed and rejoiced to see that the young man had at last got the old man going a bit. "It's only too bad," they said, "that the young fellow hasn't enough ground under his feet; else he might make a dikemaster of the kind we used to have—but those few acres of his old man wouldn't do, after all!"

Next autumn, when the inspector and the dikemaster general came for the inspection, he looked at old Tede Volkerts from top to toe, while the latter was urging him to sit down to lunch.

"I tell you, dikemaster," he said, "I was thinking—you have actually grown ten years younger. You have set my blood coursing with all your proposals; if only we can get down with all that to-day!"

"Oh, we shall, we shall, your Honor," replied the old man

with a smirk; "the roast goose over there will give us strength! Yes, thank God, I am still always well and brisk!" He looked round the room to make sure that Hauke was not about; then he added with calm dignity: "And so I hope I may fulfill the duties of my office a few more blessed years."

"And to this, my dear dikemaster," returned his superior, "we want to drink this glass together."

Elke who had looked after the lunch laughed to herself as she left the room just when the glasses were clicking. Then she took a dish of scraps from the kitchen and walked through the stable to give them to the poultry in front of the outside door. In the stable stood Hauke Haien and with his pitchfork put hay into the racks of the cows that had to be brought up here so early because of the bad weather. But when he saw the girl come, he stuck the pitchfork into the ground. "Well, Elke!" he said.

She stood still and nodded at him: "All right, Hauke—but you should have been in there!"

"Do you think so? Why, Elke?"

"The dikemaster general has praised the master!"

"The master? What has that to do with me?"

"No, I mean, he has praised the dikemaster!"

The young man's face was flushed crimson: "I know very well," he said, "what you are driving at."

"Don't blush, Hauke; it was really you whom the dikemaster general praised!"

Hauke looked at her with a half smile. "You too, Elke!" he said.

But she shook her head: "No, Hauke; when I was helper alone, we got no praise. And then, I can only do arithmetic; but you see everything outdoors that the dikemaster is supposed to see for himself. You have cut me out!"

"That isn't what I intended—least of all you!" said Hauke timidly, and he pushed aside the head of a cow. "Come, Redskin, don't swallow my pitchfork, you'll get all you want!"

"Don't think that I'm sorry, Hauke;" said the girl after thinking a little while; "that really is a man's business."

Then Hauke stretched out his arm toward her. "Elke, give me your hand, so that I can be sure."

Beneath her dark brows a deep crimson flushed the girl's face. "Why? I'm not lying!" she cried.

Hauke wanted to reply; but she had already left the stable, and he stood with his pitchfork in his hand and heard only the cackling and crowing of the ducks and the hens round her outside.

In the January of Hauke's third year of service a winter festival was to be held—"Eisboseln" they call it here. The winds had been calm on the coast and steady frost had covered all the ditches between the fens with a solid, even, crystal surface, so that the marked-off strips of land offered a wide field for the throwing at a goal of little wooden balls filled with lead. Day in, day out, a light northeast wind was blowing: everything had been prepared. The people from the higher land, inhabitants of the village that lay eastward above the marshes, who had won last year, had been challenged to a match and had accepted. From either side nine players had been picked. The umpire and the score-keepers had been chosen. The latter, who had to discuss a doubtful throw whenever a difference of opinion came up, were always chosen from among people who knew how to place their own case in the best possible light, preferably young fellows who not only had good common sense but also a ready tongue. Among these was, above all, Ole Peters, the head man of the dikemaster. "Throw away like devils!" he said; "I'll do the talking for nothing!"

Toward evening on the day before the holiday a number of throwers had appeared in the side room of the parish inn up on the higher land, in order to decide about accepting some men who had applied in the last moment. Hauke Haien was among these. At first he had not wanted to take part, although he was well aware of having arms skilled in throwing; but he was afraid that he might be rejected by Ole Peters who had a post of honor in the game, and he wanted to spare himself this defeat. But Elke had made him change his mind at the eleventh hour. "He won't dare, Hauke," she had said; "he is the son of a day laborer; your father has his cow and horse and is the cleverest man in the village."

"But if he should manage to, after all?"

Half smiling she looked at him with her dark eyes. "Then he'll get left," she said, "in the evening, when he wants to dance with his master's daughter." Then Hauke had nodded to her with spirit.

Now the young men who still hoped to be taken into the game stood shivering and stamping outside the parish inn and looked up at the top of the stone church tower which stood beside the tavern. The pastor's pigeons which during the summer found their food on the fields of the village were just returning from the farmyards and barns of the peasants, where they had pecked their grain, and were disappearing into their nests underneath the shingles of the tower. In the west, over the sea, there was a glowing sunset.

"We'll have good weather to-morrow," said one of the young fellows, and began to wander up and down excitedly; "but cold—cold." Another man, when he saw no more pigeons flying, walked into the house and stood listening beside the door of the room in which a lively babble was now sounding. The second man of the dikemaster, too, had stepped up beside him. "Listen, Hauke," he said to the latter; "now they are making all this noise about you." And clearly one could hear from inside Ole Peters's grating voice: "Underlings and boys don't belong here!"

"Come," whispered the other man and tried to pull Hauke by his sleeve to the door of the room, "here you you can learn how high they value you."

But Hauke tore himself away and went to the front of the house again: "They haven't barred us out so that we should hear," he called back.

Before the house stood the third of the applicants. "I'm afraid there's a hitch in this business for me," he called to Hauke; "I'm barely eighteen years old; if they only won't ask for my birth certificate! Your head man, Hauke, will get you out of your fix, all right!"

"Yes, out!" growled Hauke and kicked a stone across the road; "but not in!"

The noise in the room was growing louder; then gradually there was calm. Those outside could again hear the gentle northeast wind that broke against the point of the

church steeple. The man who listened joined them. "Whom did they take in there?" asked the eighteen-year-old one.

"Him!" said the other, and pointed to Hauke; "Ole Peters wanted to make him out as a boy; but the others shouted against it.—'And his father has cattle and land,' said Jess Hansen.—'Yes, land,' cried Ole Peters, 'land that one can cart away on thirteen wheelbarrows!' Last came Ole Hensen: 'Keep still!' he cried; 'I'll make things clear: tell me, who is the first man in the village?'—Then all kept mum and seemed to be thinking. Then a voice said: 'I should say it was the dikemaster!'—'And who is the dikemaster?' cried Ole Hensen again; 'but now think twice!'—Then somebody began to laugh quietly, and then someone else too, and so on till there was nothing but loud laughter in the room.—'Well, then call him,' said Ole Hensen; 'you don't want to keep the dikemaster out in the cold!'—I believe they're still laughing; but Ole Peters's voice could not be heard any more!" Thus the young fellow ended his account.

Almost in the same instant the door of the room inside the house was opened suddenly and out into the cold night sounded loud and merry cries of "Hauke! Hauke Haien!"

Then Hauke marched into the house and never could hear the rest of the story of who was the dikemaster; meanwhile no one has found out what was going on in his head.

After a while, when he approached the house of his employers, he saw Elke standing by the fence below, where the ascent began; the moonlight was shimmering over the measureless white frosted pasture.

"You are standing here, Elke?" he asked.

She only nodded: "What happened?" she said; "has he dared?"

"What wouldn't he—?"

"Well, and—?"

"Yes, Elke; I'm allowed to try it to-morrow!"

"Good night, Hauke!" And she fled up the slope and vanished into the house.

Slowly he followed her.

Next afternoon on the wide pasture that extended in the east along the land side of the dike, one could see a dark crowd. Now it would stand motionless, now move gradually

on, down from the long and low houses lying behind it, as soon as a wooden ball had twice shot forth from it over the ground now freed by the bright sun from frost. The teams of the "Eisbosler" were in the middle, surrounded by old and young, by all who lived with them in these houses or up in those of the higher land—the older men in long coats, pensively smoking their short pipes, the women in shawls or jackets, some leading children by the hand or carrying them on their arms. From the frozen ditches, which were being crossed gradually, the pale light of the afternoon sun was gleaming through the sharp points of the sedges. It was keen frost, but the game went on uninterruptedly, and the eyes of all were again and again following the flying ball, for upon it depended the honor of the whole village for the day. The score-keepers of the two sides carried a white stick with an iron point for the home team, a black one of the same kind for the team of the people from the upper land. Where the ball ended its flight, the stick was driven into the frozen ground, accompanied, as it happened, either by silent approval or the derisive laughter of the opposing side; and he whose ball had first reached the goal, had won the game for his team.

Little was said by all these people; only when a capital throw had been made, a cry from the young men or women could be heard, sometimes, too, one of the old men would take his pipe out of his mouth and knock with it on the shoulder of the thrower with a few cheering words: "That was a good throw, said Zacharias, and threw his wife out of the door!" or: "That's the way your father threw, too; God bless him in eternity!" or some other friendly saying.

Hauke had no luck with his first throw: just as he was swinging his arm backward in order to hurl off the ball, a cloud sailed away which had covered the sun so that now its bright beams shot into his eyes; the throw was too short, the ball fell on a ditch and remained stuck in the ice.

"That doesn't count! That doesn't count! Hauke, once more!" called his partners.

But the score-keeper of the people from the high land protested against this: "It'll have to count; a throw is a throw!"

"Ole! Ole Peters!" cried the young folks of the marshes. "Where is Ole? Where the devil is he?"

But there he was: "Don't scream so! Does Hauke have to be patched up somewhere? I thought as much."

"Never mind! Hauke has to throw again; now show that your tongue is good for something!"

"Oh, it is all right!" cried Ole and stepped up to the score-keeper of the other side and talked a lot of bosh. But the pointedness and sharpness of his usually so scintillating words were absent this time. Beside him stood the girl with the enigmatic eyebrows and looked at him sharply with angry glances; but she was not allowed to talk, for women had no say in the game.

"You are babbling nonsense," cried the other score-keeper, "because you can't use any sense for this! Sun, moon and stars are alike for us all and always in the sky; the throw was awkward, and all awkward throws have to count!"

Thus they talked back and forth a little while, but the end of it was that, according to the decision of the umpire, Hauke was not allowed to repeat his throw.

"Come on!" called the people from the upper land, and their score-keeper pulled the black stick out of the ground, and the thrower came forward when his number was called and hurled the ball ahead. When the head man of the dike-master wanted to watch the throw, he had to pass Elke Volkerts: "For whose sake have you left your brains at home to-day?" she whispered to him.

Then he looked at her almost grimly, and all joking was gone from his broad face. "For your sake," he said, "for you have forgotten yours too!"

"Go, go—I know you, Ole Peters!" the girl replied, drawing herself up straight. But he turned his head away and pretended not to have heard.

And the game and the black and white stick went on. When Hauke's turn to throw came again, his ball flew so far, that the goal, the great whitewashed barrel, came clearly in sight. He was now a solidly built young fellow, and mathematics and the art of throwing he had practised daily in his boyhood. "Why, Hauke!" there were cries from the

crowd; "that was just as if the archangel Michael himself had thrown the ball!" An old woman with cake and brandy pushed her way through the crowd toward him; she poured out a glass for him and offered it to him: "Come," she said, "we want to be friends: this to-day is better than when you killed my cat!" When he looked at her, he recognised her as Trin Jans. "Thank you, old lady," he said; "but I don't drink that." He put his hand into his pocket and pressed a newly minted mark piece into her hand: "Take that and empty your glass yourself, Trin; and so we are friends!"

"You're right, Hauke!" replied the old woman, while she obeyed his instructions; "you're right; that's better for an old woman like me!"

"How are your ducks getting on" he called after her, when she had already started on her way with her basket; but she only shook her head, without turning round, and struck the air with her old hands. "Nothing, nothing, Hauke; there are too many rats in your ditches; God help me, but I've got to support myself some other way!" And so she pushed her way into the crowd and again offered her brandy and honey cake.

The sun had at last gone down behind the dike; in his stead rose a red violet glimmer; now and then black crows flew by and for moments looked gilded: evening had come. But on the fens the dark mass of people were moving still farther away from the already distant houses toward the barrel; an especially good throw would have to reach it now. The people of the marshes were having their turn: Hauke was to throw.

The chalky barrel showed white against the broad evening shadow that now fell from the dike across the plain.

"I guess you'll leave it to us this time," called one of the people of the upper land, for it was very close; they had the advantage of at least ten feet.

Hauke's lean figure was just stepping out of the crowd; the grey eyes in his long Frisian face were looking ahead at the barrel; in his hand which hung down he held the ball.

"I suppose the bird is too big for you," he heard Ole Peters's grating voice in this instant behind his ears; "shall we exchange it for a grey pot?"

Hauke turned round and looked at him with steady eyes: "I'm throwing for the marshes," he said. "Where do you belong?"

"I think, I belong there too; I suppose you're throwing for Elke Volkerts!"

"Go!" shouted Hauke and stood in position again. But Ole pushed his head still nearer to him. Then suddenly, before Hauke could do anything against it himself, a hand clutched the intruder and pulled him back, so that the fellow reeled against his comrades. It was not a large hand that had done it; for when Hauke turned his head round for a moment he saw Elke Volkerts putting her sleeve to rights, and her dark brows looked angry in her heated face.

Now something like steely strength shot into Hauke's arm; he bent forward a little, rocked the ball a few times in his hand; then he made the throw, and there was dead silence on both sides. All eyes followed the flying ball, one could hear it whizz as it cut the air; suddenly, already far from the starting point, it was covered by the wings of a silver gull that came flying from the dike with a scream. At the same time, however, one could hear something bang from a distance against the barrel.

"Hurrah for Hauke!" called the people from the marshes, and cries went through the crowd: "Hauke! Hauke Haien has won the game!"

He, however, when all were crowding round him, had thrust his hand to one side to seize another; and even when they called again: "Why are you still standing there, Hauke? The ball is in the barrel!"—he only nodded and did not budge from his place. Only when he felt that the little hand lay fast in his, he said: "You may be right; I think myself I have won."

Then the whole company streamed back and Elke and Hauke were separated and pushed on by the crowd along the road to the inn which ascended from the hill of the dikemaster to the upper land. At this point both escaped the crowd, and while Elke went up to her room, Hauke stood in front of the stable door on the hill and saw how the dark mass of people was gradually wandering up to the parish tavern where a hall was ready for the dancers.

Darkness was slowly spreading over the wide land; it was growing calmer and calmer round about, only in the stable behind him the cattle were stirring; from up on the high land he believed that he could already hear the piping of the clarinets in the tavern. Then round the corner of the house he heard the rustling of a dress, and with small steady steps someone was walking along the path that led through the fens up to the high land. Now he discerned the figure walking along in the twilight, and saw that it was Elke; she, too, was going to the dance at the inn. The blood shot up to his neck; shouldn't he run after her and go with her? But Hauke was no hero with women; pondering over this problem, he remained standing still until she had vanished from his sight in the dark.

Then, when the danger of catching up with her was over, he walked along the same way until he had reached the inn by the church, where the chattering and shouting of the crowds in front of the house and in the hall and the shrill sounds of the violins and clarinets surged round him and bewildered his senses. Unobserved he made his way into the Guildhall; but it was not large and so crowded that he could not look a step ahead of him. Silently he stood by the doorpost and looked into the restless swarm. These people seemed to him like fools; he did not have to worry that anyone was still thinking of the match of this afternoon and about who had won the game only an hour ago; everybody thought only of his girl and spun round with her in a circle. His eyes sought only the one, and at last—there! She was dancing with her cousin, the young dike overseer; but soon he saw her no longer, only other girls from the marshes or the high land who did not concern him. Then suddenly the violins and clarinets broke off, and the dance was over; but immediately another one began. An idea shot through Hauke's head—he wondered if Elke would keep her word and if she would not dance by him with Ole Peters. He had almost uttered a scream at this thought; then—yes, what should he do then? But she did not seem to be joining in this dance, and at last it was over. Another one followed, however, a two-step which had just come into vogue here. The music started up madly, the young

fellows rushed to their girls, the lights flickered along the walls. Hauke strained his neck to recognise the dancers; and there in the third couple, was Ole Peters—but who was his partner? A broad fellow from the marshes stood in front of her and covered her face! But the dance was raging on, and Ole and his partner were turning out of the crowd. "Vollina! Vollina Harders!" cried Hauke almost aloud, and drew a sigh of relief. But where was Elke? Did she have no partner or had she rejected all because she did not want to dance with Ole? And the music broke off again, and a new dance began; but she was not in sight! There came Ole, still with fat Vollina in his arms! "Well, well," said Hauke; "Jess Harders with his twenty-five acres will soon have to retire too! But where is Elke?"

He left the doorpost and crowded farther into the hall; suddenly he was standing in front of her, as she sat with an older girl friend in a corner. "Hauke!" she called, looking up to him with her narrow face; "are you here? I didn't see you dance."

"I didn't dance," he replied.

"Why not, Hauke?" and half rising she added: "Do you want to dance with me? I didn't let Ole Peters do it; he won't come again!"

But Hauke made no move in this direction: "Thank you, Elke," he said; "I don't know how to dance well enough; they might laugh at you; and then—" he stopped short and looked at her with his whole heart in his grey eyes, as if he had to leave it to them to say the rest.

"What do you mean, Hauke?" she said in a low voice.

"I mean, Elke, the day can't turn out any better for me than it has done already."

"Yes," she said, "you have won the game."

"Elke!" he reproached her almost inaudibly.

Then her face flushed crimson: "Go!" she said; "what do you want?" and she cast down her eyes.

But when Elke's friend was being drawn away to the dance by a young man, Hauke said louder: "I thought Elke, I had won something better!"

A few seconds longer her eyes searched the floor; then

she raised them slowly, and a glance met his so full of the quiet power of her nature that it streamed through him like summer air. "Do as your heart tells you to, Hauke!" she said; "we ought to know each other!"

Elke did not dance any more that evening, and then, when both went home, they walked hand in hand. Stars were gleaming in the sky above the silent marshes; a light east wind was blowing and bringing severe cold with it; but the two walked on, without many shawls or coverings, as if it had suddenly turned spring.

Hauke had set his mind on something the fit use for which lay in the uncertain future; but he had thought of celebrating with it quietly by himself. So the next Sunday he went into the city to the old goldsmith Andersen and ordered a strong gold ring. "Stretch out your finger for me to measure!" said the old man and seized his ring-finger. "Well," he said; "yours isn't quite so big as they usually are with you people!" But Hauke said: "You had better measure the little finger," and held that one toward him.

The goldsmith looked at him puzzled; but what did he care about the notions of the young peasant fellows. "I guess we can find one among the girls' rings" he said. and the blood shot into both of Hauke's cheeks. But the little gold ring fitted his little finger, and he took it hastily and paid for it with shining silver; then he put it into his waistcoat pocket while his heart beat loudly as if he were performing a ceremony. There he kept it thenceforth every day with restlessness and yet with pride, as if the waistcoat pocket had no other purpose than to carry a ring.

Thus he carried it for over a year—indeed, the ring even had to wander into a new waistcoat pocket; the occasion for its liberation had not yet presented itself. To be sure, it had occurred to him that he might go straight to his master; his own father was, after all, a landholder too. But when he was calmer, he knew very well that the old dikemaster would have laughed at his second man. And so he and the dikemaster's daughter lived on side by side—she, too, in maidenly silence, and yet both as if they were walking hand in hand.

Beneath her dark brows a deep crimson flushed the girl's face. "Why? I'm not lying!" she cried.

Hauke wanted to reply; but she had already left the stable, and he stood with his pitchfork in his hand and heard only the cackling and crowing of the ducks and the hens round her outside.

In the January of Hauke's third year of service a winter festival was to be held—"Eisboseln" they call it here. The winds had been calm on the coast and steady frost had covered all the ditches between the fens with a solid, even, crystal surface, so that the marked-off strips of land offered a wide field for the throwing at a goal of little wooden balls filled with lead. Day in, day out, a light northeast wind was blowing: everything had been prepared. The people from the higher land, inhabitants of the village that lay eastward above the marshes, who had won last year, had been challenged to a match and had accepted. From either side nine players had been picked. The umpire and the score-keepers had been chosen. The latter, who had to discuss a doubtful throw whenever a difference of opinion came up, were always chosen from among people who knew how to place their own case in the best possible light, preferably young fellows who not only had good common sense but also a ready tongue. Among these was, above all, Ole Peters, the head man of the dikemaster. "Throw away like devils!" he said; "I'll do the talking for nothing!"

Toward evening on the day before the holiday a number of throwers had appeared in the side room of the parish inn up on the higher land, in order to decide about accepting some men who had applied in the last moment. Hauke Haien was among these. At first he had not wanted to take part, although he was well aware of having arms skilled in throwing; but he was afraid that he might be rejected by Ole Peters who had a post of honor in the game, and he wanted to spare himself this defeat. But Elke had made him change his mind at the eleventh hour. "He won't dare, Hauke," she had said; "he is the son of a day laborer; your father has his cow and horse and is the cleverest man in the village."

"But if he should manage to, after all?"

Half smiling she looked at him with her dark eyes. "Then he'll get left," she said, "in the evening, when he wants to dance with his master's daughter." Then Hauke had nodded to her with spirit.

Now the young men who still hoped to be taken into the game stood shivering and stamping outside the parish inn and looked up at the top of the stone church tower which stood beside the tavern. The pastor's pigeons which during the summer found their food on the fields of the village were just returning from the farmyards and barns of the peasants, where they had pecked their grain, and were disappearing into their nests underneath the shingles of the tower. In the west, over the sea, there was a glowing sunset.

"We'll have good weather to-morrow," said one of the young fellows, and began to wander up and down excitedly; "but cold—cold." Another man, when he saw no more pigeons flying, walked into the house and stood listening beside the door of the room in which a lively babble was now sounding. The second man of the dikemaster, too, had stepped up beside him. "Listen, Hauke," he said to the latter; "now they are making all this noise about you." And clearly one could hear from inside Ole Peters's grating voice: "Underlings and boys don't belong here!"

"Come," whispered the other man and tried to pull Hauke by his sleeve to the door of the room, "here you you can learn how high they value you."

But Hauke tore himself away and went to the front of the house again: "They haven't barred us out so that we should hear," he called back.

Before the house stood the third of the applicants. "I'm afraid there's a hitch in this business for me," he called to Hauke; "I'm barely eighteen years old; if they only won't ask for my birth certificate! Your head man, Hauke, will get you out of your fix, all right!"

"Yes, out!" growled Hauke and kicked a stone across the road; "but not in!"

The noise in the room was growing louder; then gradually there was calm. Those outside could again hear the gentle northeast wind that broke against the point of the

church steeple. The man who listened joined them. "Whom did they take in there?" asked the eighteen-year-old one.

"Him!" said the other, and pointed to Hauke; "Ole Peters wanted to make him out as a boy; but the others shouted against it.—'And his father has cattle and land,' said Jess Hansen.—'Yes, land,' cried Ole Peters, 'land that one can cart away on thirteen wheelbarrows!' Last came Ole Hensen: 'Keep still!' he cried; 'I'll make things clear: tell me, who is the first man in the village?'—Then all kept mum and seemed to be thinking. Then a voice said: 'I should say it was the dikemaster!'—'And who is the dikemaster?' cried Ole Hensen again; 'but now think twice!'—Then somebody began to laugh quietly, and then someone else too, and so on till there was nothing but loud laughter in the room.—'Well, then call him,' said Ole Hensen; 'you don't want to keep the dikemaster out in the cold!'—I believe they're still laughing; but Ole Peters's voice could not be heard any more!" Thus the young fellow ended his account.

Almost in the same instant the door of the room inside the house was opened suddenly and out into the cold night sounded loud and merry cries of "Hauke! Hauke Haien!"

Then Hauke marched into the house and never could hear the rest of the story of who was the dikemaster; meanwhile no one has found out what was going on in his head.

After a while, when he approached the house of his employers, he saw Elke standing by the fence below, where the ascent began; the moonlight was shimmering over the measureless white frosted pasture.

"You are standing here, Elke?" he asked.

She only nodded: "What happened?" she said; "has he dared?"

"What wouldn't he—?"

"Well, and—?"

"Yes, Elke; I'm allowed to try it to-morrow!"

"Good night, Hauke!" And she fled up the slope and vanished into the house.

Slowly he followed her.

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He left the doorpost and crowded farther into the hall; suddenly he was standing in front of her, as she sat with an older girl friend in a corner. "Hauke!" she called, looking up to him with her narrow face; "are you here? I didn't see you dance."

"I didn't dance," he replied.

"Why not, Hauke?" and half rising she added: "Do you want to dance with me? I didn't let Ole Peters do it; he won't come again!"

But Hauke made no move in this direction: "Thank you, Elke," he said; "I don't know how to dance well enough; they might laugh at you; and then—" he stopped short and looked at her with his whole heart in his grey eyes, as if he had to leave it to them to say the rest.

"What do you mean, Hauke?" she said in a low voice.

"I mean, Elke, the day can't turn out any better for me than it has done already."

"Yes," she said, "you have won the game."

"Elke!" he reproached her almost inaudibly.

Then her face flushed crimson: "Go!" she said; "what do you want?" and she cast down her eyes.

But when Elke's friend was being drawn away to the dance by a young man, Hauke said louder: "I thought Elke, I had won something better!"

A few seconds longer her eyes searched the floor; then

she raised them slowly, and a glance met his so full of the quiet power of her nature that it streamed through him like summer air. "Do as your heart tells you to, Hauke!" she said; "we ought to know each other!"

Elke did not dance any more that evening, and then, when both went home, they walked hand in hand. Stars were gleaming in the sky above the silent marshes; a light east wind was blowing and bringing severe cold with it; but the two walked on, without many shawls or coverings, as if it had suddenly turned spring.

Hauke had set his mind on something the fit use for which lay in the uncertain future; but he had thought of celebrating with it quietly by himself. So the next Sunday he went into the city to the old goldsmith Andersen and ordered a strong gold ring. "Stretch out your finger for me to measure!" said the old man and seized his ring-finger. "Well," he said; "yours isn't quite so big as they usually are with you people!" But Hauke said: "You had better measure the little finger," and held that one toward him.

The goldsmith looked at him puzzled; but what did he care about the notions of the young peasant fellows. "I guess we can find one among the girls' rings" he said, and the blood shot into both of Hauke's cheeks. But the little gold ring fitted his little finger, and he took it hastily and paid for it with shining silver; then he put it into his waistcoat pocket while his heart beat loudly as if he were performing a ceremony. There he kept it thenceforth every day with restlessness and yet with pride, as if the waistcoat pocket had no other purpose than to carry a ring.

Thus he carried it for over a year—indeed, the ring even had to wander into a new waistcoat pocket; the occasion for its liberation had not yet presented itself. To be sure, it had occurred to him that he might go straight to his master; his own father was, after all, a landholder too. But when he was calmer, he knew very well that the old dikemaster would have laughed at his second man. And so he and the dikemaster's daughter lived on side by side—she, too, in maidenly silence, and yet both as if they were walking hand in hand.

A year after that winter holiday Ole Peters had left his position and married Vollina Harders. Hauke had been right: the old man had retired, and instead of his fat daughter his brisk son-in-law was riding the brown mare over the fens and, as people said, on his way back always up the dike. Hauke was head man now, and a younger one in his place. To be sure, the dikemaster at first did not want to let him move up. "It's better he stays what he is," he had growled; "I need him here with my books." But Elke had told him: "Then Hauke will go too, father." So the old man had been scared, and Hauke had been made head man, although he had nevertheless kept on helping the dikemaster with his administration.

But after another year he began to talk with Elke about how his own father's health was failing and told her that the few days in summer that his master allowed him to help on his father's farm were not enough; the old man was having a hard time, and he could not see that any more. It was on a summer evening; both stood in the twilight under the great ash tree in front of the house door. For a while the girl looked up silently into the boughs of the tree; then she replied: "I didn't want to say it, Hauke; I thought you would find the right thing to do for yourself."

"Then I will have to leave your house," he said, "and can't come again."

They were silent for a while and looked at the sunset light which vanished behind the dike in the sea.

"You must know," she said; "only this morning I went to see your father and found him asleep in his armchair; his drawing pen was in his hand and the drawing board with a half-finished drawing lay before him on the table. And when he had waked up and talked to me with effort for a quarter of an hour, and I wanted to go, then he held me back by the hand so full of fear, as if he were afraid it was for the last time; but—"

"But what, Elke?" asked Hauke, when she hesitated to go on.

A few tears ran down the girl's cheeks. "I was only thinking of my father," she said; "believe me, it will be hard for him to get on without you." And then added, as

if she had to summon her strength for these words: "It often seems to me as if he too were getting ready for death."

Hauke said nothing; it seemed to him suddenly, as if the ring were stirring in his pocket. But even before he had suppressed his indignation over this involuntary impulse, Elke went on: "No, don't be angry, Hauke; I trust you won't leave us anyway."

Then he eagerly took her hand, and she did not draw it away. For a while the young people stood together in the falling darkness, until their hands slipped apart and each went his way. A gust of wind started and rustled through the leaves of the ash tree and made the shutters rattle on the front of the house; but gradually the night sank down, and quiet lay over the gigantic plain.

Through Elke's persuasion, the old dikemaster had relieved Hauke of his services, although he had not given notice at the right time, and two new hired men were in the house. A few months later Tede Haien died; but before he died, he called his son to his bedside: "Sit by me, my child;" said the old man with his faint voice, "close by me! You don't need to be afraid; he who is near me now is only the dark angel of the Lord who comes to call me."

And his son, deeply affected, sat down close by the dark bed fixed to the wall: "Tell me, father, what you still have to say."

"Yes, my son, there is still something," said the old man and stretched out his hands across the quilt. "When, as a half-grown boy, you went to serve the dikemaster, then you had the idea in your head that you wanted to be one yourself some day. That idea I caught from you, and gradually I came to think that you were the right man for it. But your inheritance was too small for such an office. I have lived frugally during your time of service—I planned to increase it,"

Passionately Hauke seized his father's hands, and the old man tried to sit up, so that he could see him. "Yes, yes, my son," he said; "there in the uppermost drawer of the chest is a document. You know old Antje Wohlers has a fen of five and a half acres; but she could not get on

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with the rent alone in her crippled old age; so I have always round Martinmas given the poor soul a certain sum, or more when I could; and for that she gave her fen over to me; it is all legally settled. Now she too is on her death-bed; the disease of our marshes, cancer, has seized her; you won't have to pay her any more."

For a while he closed his eyes; then he spoke once more: "It isn't much; but you'll have more then than you were accustomed to with me. May it serve you well in your life on earth!"

With his son's words of thanks in his ears, the old man fell asleep. He had no more cares: and after a few days the dark angel of the Lord had closed his eyes forever, and Hauke received his inheritance.

The day after the funeral Elke came into his house. "Thanks for looking in, Elke," Hauke greeted her.

But she replied: "I'm not looking in; I want to put things in order a little, so that you can live decently in your house. Your father with all his figures and drawings didn't look round much, and the death too makes confusion. I want to make things a little livable for you."

His grey eyes looked full of confidence upon her. "All right, put things in order!" he said; "I like it better that way too."

And then she began to clear up: the drawing board, which was still lying there, was dusted and carried up to the attic, drawing pens and pencil and chalk were locked away carefully in a drawer of the chest; then the young servant girl was called in to help and the furniture was put into different and better positions in the room, so that it seemed as if it now had grown lighter and bigger. Smiling, Elke said: "Only we women can do that," and Hauke in spite of his mourning for his father, had watched her with happy eyes, and, where there was need for it, had helped too.

And when toward dusk—it was in the beginning of September—everything was just as she wanted it for him, she took his hand and nodded to him with her dark eyes: "Now come and have supper with us; for I had to promise my father

to bring you; then when you go home, you can enter your house in peace."

Then when they came into the spacious living-room of the dikemaster, where the shutters were already closed and the two candles burning on the table, the latter wanted to rise from his armchair, but his heavy body sank back and he only called to his former man: "That's right, that's right, Hauke, that you've come to see your old friends. Come nearer, still nearer." And when Hauke had stepped up to his chair, he took his hand into both of his own: "Now, now, my boy," he said, "be calm now, for we all must die, and your father was none of the worst." But Elke, now see that the roast gets on to the table; we have to get strength. There's a great deal of work for us, Hauke! The fall inspection is coming; there's a pile of dike and sluice bills as high as the house; the damage to the dike of the western enclosure the other day—I don't know where my head is, but yours, thank God, is a good bit younger; you're a good boy, Hauke."

And after this long speech, with which the old man had laid bare his whole heart, he let himself drop back into his chair and blinked longingly toward the door, through which Elke was just coming in with the roast on the platter. Hauke stood smiling beside him. "Now sit down," said the dikemaster, "so that we won't lose time for nothing; that doesn't taste well cold."

And Hauke sat down; it seemed to be taken for granted that he should help to do the work of Elke's father. And when the fall inspection had come and a few more months of the year were gone, he had indeed done the greatest part of the work.

The story-teller stopped and looked round. The scream of a gull had knocked against the window, and out in the hall one could hear a stamping of feet, as if someone were taking the clay off his heavy boots.

The dikemaster and the overseers turned their heads toward the door of the room. "What is it?" called the first.

A strong man with a southwester on his head had stepped in.

"Sir," he said, "we both have seen it—Hans Nickels and I: the rider on the white horse has thrown himself into the breach."

"Where did you see that?" asked the dikemaster.

"There is only the one break; in Jansen's fen, where the Hauke-Haienland begins."

"Did you see it only once?"

"Only once; it was only like a shadow, but that doesn't mean that this was the first time it happened."

The dikemaster had risen. "You must excuse me," he said, turning to me, "we have to go out and see what this calamity is leading to." Then he left the room with the messenger; the rest of the company too rose and followed him.

I stayed alone with the schoolmaster in the large deserted room; through the curtainless windows, which were now no longer covered by the backs of the guests sitting in front of them, one could have a free view and see how the wind was chasing the dark clouds across the sky.

The old man remained on his seat, with a superior, almost pitying smile on his lips. "It is too empty here now," he said; "may I invite you to my room? I live in this house; and believe me, I know every kind of weather here by the dike—there is nothing for us to fear."

This invitation I accepted with thanks, for I too began to feel chilly, and so we took a light and climbed up the stairs to a room under the gables; there the windows also looked toward the west, but they were covered by woollen rugs. In a bookcase I saw a small library, beside it portraits of two old professors; before a table stood a great high armchair. "Make yourself comfortable," said my pleasant host and threw some pieces of peat into the still faintly glowing stove, which was crowned by a tin kettle on top. "Only wait a little while! The fire will soon roar; then I'll mix you a little glass of grog—that'll keep you awake!"

"I don't need that," I said; "I won't grow sleepy, when I accompany your Hauke upon his life-journey!"

"Do you think so?" and he nodded toward me with his keen eyes, after I had been comfortably settled in his armchair.

Well, where did we leave off? Yes, yes; I know. Well, Hauke had received his inheritance, and as old Antje Woh-

lers, too, had died of her ailment, his property was increased by her fen. But since the death, or rather, since the last words of his father, something had sprung up within him, the seed of which he had carried in his heart since his boyhood; he repeated to himself more often than enough that he was the right man for the post if there had to be a new dikemaster. That was it; his father, who had to know, who was the cleverest man in the village, had added his word, like a last gift to his heritage. The fen of the Wohlers woman, for which he had to thank his father too, should be the first stepping-stone to this height. For, to be sure, even with this—a dikemaster had to be able to show more real estate! But his father had got on frugally through his lonely years; and with what he had saved he had made himself owner of new property. This Hauke could do too, and even more; for his father's strength had already been spent, but he could do the hardest work for years. To be sure, even if he should succeed along this line—on account of the sharp methods he had brought into the administration of his old employer, he had made no friends in the village, and Ole Peters, his old antagonist, had just inherited property and was beginning to be a well-to-do man. A row of faces passed before his inner vision, and they all looked at him with hostile eyes. Then a rage against these people seized him: he stretched out his arms as if he would clutch them, for they wanted to push him from the office for which he alone, of all, was destined. These thoughts did not leave him; they were always there again, and so in his young heart there grew beside honor and love, also ambition and hate. But these two he locked up deep within him; even Elke surmised nothing of them.

When the new year had come, there was a wedding; the bride was a relative of the Haiens, and Hauke and Elke were both invited. Indeed, at the wedding dinner it happened that, because a nearer relative was absent, they found themselves seated side by side. Their joy about this was betrayed only by a smile that flitted over the face of each. But Elke to-day sat with indifference in the midst of the noise of chattering and the click of the glasses.

"Is something ailing you?" asked Hauke.

"Oh, really nothing; only there are too many people here for me."

"But you look so sad!"

She shook her head; then again she said nothing.

Then something like jealousy rose within him on account of her silence, and secretly, under the overhanging tablecloth, he seized her hand. She did not draw it away, but clasped it, as if full of confidence, round his. Had a feeling of loneliness come over her, as she had to watch the failing body of her father every day? Hauke did not think of asking her this; but his breathing stopped, as he pulled the gold ring from his pocket. "Will you let it stay?" he asked trembling, while he pushed the ring on the ring-finger of the slender hand.

Opposite them at the table sat the pastor's wife; she suddenly laid down her fork and turned to her neighbor: "My faith, look at that girl!" she cried; "she is turning deadly pale!"

But the blood was returning into Elke's face. "Can you wait, Hauke?" she asked in a low voice.

Clever Frisian though he was, he nevertheless had to stop and think a few seconds. "For what?" he asked then.

"You know perfectly well; I don't need to tell you."

"You are right," he said; "yes, Elke, I can wait—if it's within a human limit."

"Oh, God, I'm afraid, a very near one! Don't talk like that, Hauke; you are speaking of my father's death!" She laid her other hand on her breast; "Till then," she said, "I shall wear the gold ring here; you shan't be afraid of getting it back in my lifetime!"

Then both smiled, and their hands pressed each other so tightly that on other occasions the girl would have cried out aloud.

The pastor's wife meanwhile had looked incessantly at Elke's eyes, which were now glowing like dark fire under the lace fringe of her little gold brocade cap. But in the growing noise at the table she had not understood a word; neither did she turn to her partner again, for she was accustomed not to disturb budding marriages—and this seemed to be such

a case—if only for the sake of the promise of the wedding-fee for her husband, who did the marrying.

Elke's presentiment had come true; one morning after Easter the dikemaster Tede Volkerts had been found dead in his bed. When one looked at his face, one could see written upon it that his end had been calm. In the last months he had often expressed a weariness of life; his favorite roast, even his ducks, wouldn't please him any more.

And now there was a great funeral in the village. Up on the high land in the burying-ground round the church there was on the western side a burial-place surrounded by a wrought-iron fence. Upright against a weeping willow stood a broad blue tombstone upon which was hewn the image of death with many teeth in the skeleton jaws; beneath it one could read in large letters:

"Ah, death all earthly things devours,
Takes art and knowledge that was ours;
The mortal man at rest here lies—
God give, that blesséd he may rise."

It was the burial-place of the former dikemaster Volkert Tedsen; now a new grave had been dug in which his son, Tede Volkerts, was to be buried. And now the funeral procession was coming up from the marshes, a multitude of carriages from all parish villages. Upon the first one stood the heavy coffin, and the two shining black horses of the dikemaster's stable drew it up the sandy hill to the high land; their tails and manes were waving in the sharp spring breeze. The graveyard round the church was filled with people up to the ramparts; even on the walled gate boys were perching with little children in their arms; all wanted to see the burying.

In the house down in the marshes Elke had prepared the funeral meal in the best parlour and the living-room. Old wine was set on the table in front of the plates; by the plate of the dikemaster general—for he, too, was not missing to-day—and of the pastor there was a bottle of "Langkork" for each. When everything was ready, she went through the stable in front of the yard door; she met no one on the way,

for the hired men were at the funeral with two carriages. Here she stood still and while her mourning clothes were waving in the spring wind, she watched the last carriages down in the village drive up to the church. There after a while a great turmoil appeared, which seemed to be followed by a deadly silence. Elke folded her hands; now they must be letting the coffin into the grave: "And to dust thou shalt return!" Inevitably, in a low voice, as if she could have heard them from up here, she repeated the words. Then her eyes filled with tears, her hands folded across her breast sank into her lap. "Our Father, who art in heaven!" she prayed ardently. And when the Lord's prayer was finished, she stood a long time motionless—she, now the mistress of this great marsh farm; and thoughts of death and of life began to struggle within her.

A distant rumbling waked her. When she opened her eyes, she again saw one carriage after another drive rapidly down from the marshes and up to her farm. She straightened herself, looked ahead sharply once more and then went back, as she had come, through the stable into the solemnly ordered living-rooms. Here too there was nobody; only through the wall could she hear the bustle of the maids in the kitchen. The festive board looked so quiet and deserted; the mirror between the windows had been covered with white scarfs, and likewise the brass knobs of the stove; there was nothing bright any more in the room. Elke saw that the doors of the alcove-bed, in which her father had slept his last sleep were open and she went up and closed them fast. Almost absently she read the proverb that was written on them in golden letters between roses and carnations:

"If thou thy day's work dost aright,
Then sleep comes by itself at night."

That was from her grandfather! She cast a glance at the sideboard; it was almost empty. But through the glass doors she could still see the cut-glass goblet which her father, as he used to tell with relish, had once won as a prize when riding the ring in his youth. She took it out and set it in front of the dikemaster general's plate. Then she went to the window, for already she heard the carriages drive up the

hill; one after the other they stopped in front of her house, and, more briskly than they had come, the guests leaped from their seats to the ground. Rubbing their hands and chattering, all crowded into the room; it was not long before they sat down at the festive board, where the well-prepared dishes were steaming—in the best parlor the dikemaster general and the pastor. And noise and loud talking ran along the table, as if death had never spread its awful stillness here. Silent, with her eyes upon her guests, Elke walked round the tables with her maids, to see that nothing was missing at the funeral meal. Hauke Haien, too, sat in the living-room with Ole Peters and other small landowners.

When the meal was over, the white pipes were taken out of the corner and lighted, and Elke was again busy offering the filled coffee cups to her guests; for there was no economy in coffee, either, on this day. In the living-room, at the desk of the man just buried, the dikemaster general stood talking with the pastor and the white-haired dike overseer Jewe Manners.

"Well, gentlemen," said the former; "we have buried the old dikemaster with honor; but where shall we get the new one? I think, Manners, you will have to make up your mind to accept this dignity."

Old Manners smiled and lifted his little black velvet cap from his white hair: "Mr. Dikemaster General," he said, "the game would be too short then; when the deceased Tede Volkers was made dikemaster I was made overseer and have been now for forty years."

"That is no defect, Manners; then you know the affairs all the better and won't have any trouble with them."

But the old man shook his head: "No, no, your Honor, leave me where I am, then I can run along with the rest for a few years longer."

The pastor agreed with him: "Why not give the office," he said, "to the man who has actually managed the affairs in the last years?"

The dikemaster general looked at him: "I don't understand you, pastor!"

But the pastor pointed with his finger to the best parlor, where Hauke in a slow serious manner seemed to be explain-

ing something to two older people. "There he stands," he said; "the long Frisian over there with the keen grey eyes, the bony nose and the high, projecting forehead. He was the old man's hired man and now has his own little place; to be sure, he is rather young."

"He seems to be about thirty," said the dikemaster general, inspecting the man thus presented to him.

"He is scarcely twenty-four," remarked the overseer Manners; "but the pastor is right: all the good work that has been done with dikes and sluices and the like in the last years through the office of dikemaster has been due to him; the old man couldn't do much toward the end."

"Indeed?" said the dikemaster general; "and you think, he would be the right man to move up into the office of his old master?"

"He would be absolutely the right man," replied Jewe Manners; "but he lacks what they call here 'clay under one's feet;' his father had about fifteen, he may well have twenty acres; but with that nobody has yet been made dikemaster."

The pastor had already opened his mouth, as if he wanted to object, when Elke Volkers, who had been in the room for a while, spoke to them suddenly: "Will your Honor allow me a word?" she said to the dikemaster general; "I am speaking only to prevent a mistake from turning into a wrong."

"Then speak, Miss Elke," he replied; "wisdom always sounds well from the lips of pretty girls."

"It isn't wisdom, your Honor; I only want to tell the truth."

"That too one must be able to hear, Miss Elke."

The girl let her dark eyes glance sideways, as if she wanted to make sure that there were no superfluous ears about: "Your Honor," she began then, and her breast heaved with a stronger motion, "my godfather, Jewe Manners, told you that Hauke Haien owned only about twenty acres; that is quite true in this moment, but as soon as it will be necessary, Hauke will call his own just so many more acres as my father's, now my own farm, contains. All that together ought to be enough for a dikemaster."

Old Manners stretched his white head toward her, as if

he had to see who was talking there: "What is that?" he said; "child, what are you talking about?"

But Elke pulled a gleaming gold ring on a black ribbon out of her bodice: "I am engaged, godfather Manners," she said; "here is my ring, and Hauke Haien is my betrothed."

"And when—I think I may ask that, as I held you at your baptism, Elke Volkerts—when did that happen?"

"That happened some time ago; but I was of age, godfather Manners," she said; "my father's health had already fallen off, and as I knew him, I thought I had better not get him excited over this; now that he is with God, he will see that his child is in safekeeping with this man. I should have kept still about it through the year of mourning; but for the sake of Hauke and of the diked-in land, I had to speak." And turning to the dikemaster general, she added: "Your Honor will please forgive me."

The three men looked at one another; the pastor laughed, the old overseer limited himself to a "hm, hm!" while the dikemaster general rubbed his forehead as if he were about to make an important decision. "Yes, dear miss," he said at last, "but how about marriage property rights here in this district? I must confess I am not very well versed in these things at this moment in all this confusion."

"You don't need to be, your Honor," replied the daughter of the dikemaster, "before my wedding I shall make my goods over to my betrothed. I have my little pride too," she added smiling; "I want to marry the richest man in the village."

"Well, Manners," said the pastor, "I think you, as godfather, won't mind if I join the young dikemaster with the old one's daughter!"

The old man shook his head gently: "Our Lord give His blessing!" he said devoutly.

But the dikemaster general gave the girl his hand: "You have spoken truly and wisely, Elke Volkerts; I thank you for your firm explanations and hope to be a guest in your house in the future, too, on happier occasions than today. But that a dikemaster should have been made by such a young lady—that is the wonderful part of this story!"

"Your Honor," replied Elke and looked at the kindly high official with her serious eyes, "a true man ought to be allowed the help of his wife!" Then she went into the adjoining parlor and laid her hand silently in that of Hauke Haien.

Several years had gone by: in the little house of Tede Haien now lived a vigorous workman with his wife and child; the young dikemaster Hauke Haien lived with his wife Elke Volkerts on the farm of her father. In summer the mighty ash tree murmured as before in front of the house; but on the bench that now stood beneath it, the young wife was usually seen alone in the evening, sitting with some sewing in her hands; there was no child yet from this marriage. The husband had other things to do than to sit in front of his house door, for, in spite of his having helped in the old man's management before, there was still a multitude of labors to be done which, in those other times, he had not found it wise to touch upon; but now everything had to be cleared up gradually, and he swept with a stiff broom. Besides that, there was the management of the farm, enlarged by his own land, especially as he was trying to save a second hired man. So it came about that, except on Sundays, when they went to church, the two married people saw each other usually only during dinner, which Hauke ate with great haste, and at the rise and close of day; it was a life of continuous work, although one of content.

Then a troublesome rumor started. When one Sunday, after church, a somewhat noisy company of young landowners from the marshes and the higher land had stayed over their cups at the inn, they talked, when it came to the fourth and fifth glass, not about the king and the government, to be sure—they did not soar so high in those days—but about communal and higher officials, specially about the taxes demanded of the community. And the longer they talked, the less there was that found mercy in their eyes, particularly not the new dike taxes. All the sluices and locks had always held out before, and now they have to be repaired; always new places were found on the dike that required hundreds of cartloads of earth—the devil take the whole affair!

"That's all on account of your clever dikemaster," cried

one of the people of the higher land, "who always goes round pondering and sticks his finger into every pie!"

"Yes, he is tricky and wants to win the favor of the dikemaster general; but we have caught him!"

"Why did you let him be thrust on you?" said the other; "now you have to pay in cash."

Ole Peters laughed. "Yes, Marten Fedders, that's the way it is here, and it can't be helped: the old one was made dikemaster on account of his father, the new one on account of his wife." The laughter which ran round the table showed how this sally was appreciated.

But as it had been spoken at the public table of an inn, it did not stay there, and it was circulated in the village of the high land as well as that of the marshes below; and so it reached Hauke. Again the row of ill-meaning faces passed by his inner eye, and he heard the laughter round the tavern table more jeering than it really was. "Dogs!" he shouted, and his eyes looked grimly to the side, as if he wanted to have these people whipped.

Then Elke laid her hand upon his arm: "Let them be; they all would like to be what you are."

"That's just it," he replied angrily.

"And," she went on, "didn't Ole Peters better himself by marriage?"

"He did, Elke; but what he married with Vollina wasn't enough to be dikemaster on."

"Say rather: he wasn't enough," and Elke turned her husband round so that he had to look into the mirror, for they stood between the windows in their room. "There is the dikemaster!" she said; "now look at him; only he who can manage an office has it."

"You're not wrong," he replied pensively, "and yet—Well, Elke, I have to go to the eastern lock; the gates won't close again."

He went; but he was not gone long, before the repairing of the lock was forgotten. Another idea, which he had only half thought out and carried round with him for years, which, however, had been pushed back by the urgent affairs of his office, now took hold of him again and more powerfully than before, as if he had suddenly grown wings.

Before he was really aware of it himself, he found himself on the sea-dike a good way south toward the city; the village that lay on this side had some time ago vanished to the left. He was still walking on, fixing his eyes constantly on the seaward side of the broad foreland. If some one had walked beside him, he must have seen what concentrated mental work was going on behind those eyes, At last he stood still: the foreland here dwindled into a narrow strip along the dike. "It will have to work!" he said to himself. "Seven years in the office—they shan't say any more that I am dikemaster only because of my wife."

He was still standing there, and his eyes swept sharply and thoughtfully on all sides over the green foreland. Then he walked back until, here too, the broad plain that lay before him ended in a narrow strip of green pastureland. Through this, close by the dike, shot a strong arm of the sea which divided almost the whole foreland from the mainland and made it an island; a crude wooden bridge led to it, so that one could go back and forth with cattle or teams of hay or grain. It was low tide now, and the golden September sun was glistening on the strip of wet clay, about a hundred feet broad, and on the deep channel in the middle of it through which the sea was even now driving its waters. "That can be damned!" said Hauke to himself, after he had watched this playing of the water for a while. Then he looked up, and on from the dike upon which he stood, past the channel, he drew an imaginary line along the edge of the isolated land, round toward the south and back again to the east over the eastern continuation of the channel, up to the dike. But the line which he had drawn invisibly was a new dike, new also in the construction of its outline, which as yet existed only in his head.

"That would make dammed-in-land of about a thousand acres," he said smiling to himself; "not so large; but—"

Another calculation came into his mind: the foreland here belonged to the community, or rather, a number of shares to the single members, according to the size of their property in the municipality or other legal income. He began to count up how many shares he had received from his father and how many from Elke's father, and how many he had

already bought during his marriage, partly with a dim foreboding of future gain, partly because of his increased sheep stock. It was a considerable lot; for he had also bought all of Ole Peter's shares when the latter had been disgusted because his best ram had been drowned, once when the foreland had been partly flooded. What excellent pasture and farm land that must make and how valuable it would be if it were all surrounded by his new dike! Like intoxication this idea rose into his brain; but he pressed his nails into the hollows of his hands and forced his eyes to see clearly and soberly what lay there before him: a great plain without a dike exposed to who knew what storms and floods in the next years, and at its outermost edge a herd of dirty sheep now wandering and grazing slowly. That meant a heap of work, struggle, and annoyance for him! In spite of all that, as he was walking on the footpath down from the dike across the fens toward his hill, he felt as if he were carrying home a great treasure.

In the hall Elke came to meet him: "How about the lock?" she asked.

He looked down at her with a mysterious smile: "We shall soon need another lock," he said; "and sluices and a new dike."

"I don't understand," returned Elke, as they walked into the room; "what do you want to do, Hauke?"

"I want," he began slowly and then stopped for a second, "I want the big foreland that begins opposite our place and stretches on westward to be diked in and made into a solid enclosure. The high floods have left us in peace for almost a generation now; but when one of the bad ones comes again and destroys the growth down there—then all at once there'll be an end to all this glory. Only the old slackway has let things stay like this till to-day."

She looked at him with astonishment: "Why, you are scolding yourself!" she said.

"I am, Elke; but till now there were so many other things to do."

"Yes, Hauke; surely, you have done enough."

He had sat down in the armchair of the old dikemaster, and his hands were clutching both arms fast.

"Have you the courage for it?" his wife asked him.

"I have that, Elke," he spoke hastily.

"Don't be too hasty, Hauke; that work is a matter of life and death; and almost all the people will be against you, they won't thank you for your labor and trouble."

He nodded. "I know that!" he said.

"And if it will only succeed," she cried again, "ever since I was a child I heard that the channel can't be stopped up, and that therefore one shouldn't touch it."

"That was an excuse for the lazy ones!" said Hauke; "why shouldn't one be able to stop up the channel?"

"That I have not heard; perhaps because it goes right through; the rush of the water is too strong." A remembrance came over her and an almost mischievous smile gleamed out of her serious eyes: "When I was a child," she told, "I heard our hired men talk about it once; they said, if a dam was to hold there, some live thing would have to be thrown into the hole and diked up with the rest; when they were building a dike on the other side, about a hundred years ago, a gipsy child was dammed in that they had bought from its mother for a lot of money. But now I suppose no one would sell her child."

Hauke shook his head: "Then it is just as well that we have none; else they would do nothing less than demand it of us."

"They shouldn't get it!" said Elke and folded her arms across her body as if in fear.

And Hauke smiled; but she asked again: "And the huge cost? Have you thought of that?"

"I have, Elke; what we will get out of it will far surpass the cost; even the cost of keeping up the old dike will be covered a good bit by the new one. We do our own work and there are over eighty teams of horses in the community, and there is no lack of young strong arms. At least you shan't have made me dikemaster for nothing, Elke; I want to show them that I am one!"

She had been crouching in front of him and looking at him full of care; now she rose with a sigh. "I have to go back to my day's work," she said, and gently stroked his cheek; "you do yours, Hauke."

"Amen, Elke!" he said with a serious smile; "there is work enough for us both."

There was truly work enough for both, but the heaviest burden was now on the man's shoulder. On Sunday afternoons, often too in the evenings, Hauke sat together with a good surveyor, deep in calculations, drawings and plans; when he was alone, he did the same and often did not stop till long after midnight. Then he would slip into their common sleeping-room—for the stuffy beds fixed to the wall in the living-room were no longer used in Hauke's household—and his wife would lie with her eyes closed, pretending to sleep, so that he would get his rest at last, although she was really waiting for him with a beating heart. Then he would sometimes kiss her forehead and say a low word of love, and then lie down to sleep, though sleep often did not come to him before the first crowing of the cock. In the winter storms he ran out on the dike with pencil and paper in his hand, and stood and made drawings and took notes while a gust of wind would tear his cap from his head and make his long, light hair fly round his heated face. Soon, as long as the ice did not bar his way, he rowed with a servant out into the sea and with plumb line and rods measured the depths of the currents about which he was not yet sure. Often enough Elke trembled for his life, but when he was safely back, he could hardly have noticed anything, except by the tight clasp of her hand or by the bright lightning that gleamed from her usually so quiet eyes. "Have patience, Elke," he said once when it seemed to him as if his wife would not let him alone; "I have to have the whole thing clear to myself before I propose it." Then she nodded and let him be. There were no less rides into the city, either, to see the dikemaster general, and all these and the labors for house and farm were always followed by work late into the night. His intercourse with other people outside of his work and business vanished almost entirely; even with his wife it grew less and less. "These are bad times, and they will last long yet," said Elke to herself and went to her work.

At last, when sun and spring winds had broken the ice everywhere, the last work in preparation had been done.

The petition to the dikemaster general, to be seconded by a higher official, contained the proposal that the foreland should be diked for the promoting of the general weal, particularly of the diked-in district, as well as the ruler's treasury, as this would receive in a few years the taxes from about a thousand acres. This was neatly copied and put into a firm envelope together with the corresponding drafts and plans of all the positions, present and future, of the locks and sluices and everything else that belonged to the project; and this was sealed with the official seal of the dikemaster.

"Here it is, Elke," said the young dikemaster; "now give it your blessing."

Elke laid her hand into his: "We want to stand by each other," she said.

"Yes, we do."

Then the petition was sent into the city by a messenger on horseback.

I must call your attention to the fact, dear sir, the schoolmaster interrupted his account, fixing his eyes pleasantly upon me, that what I have told you up to this point I have gathered during my activity of almost forty years in this district from the traditions of intelligent people or from the tales of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. What I am about to tell you now, so that you may find the right connection between what has gone before and the final outcome of my story, used to be and is still the talk of the whole marsh village, as soon as the spinning-wheels begin to whir round All Saints' Day.

If one stood on the dike, about five or six hundred feet to the north of the dikemaster's farm, one could, at that time, look a few thousand feet out over the sea, and somewhat farther from the opposite shore one could see a little island, which they called "Jeverssand," or "Jevers Island." Our forefathers of that generation had used it as a pasture for sheep, for at that time grass was still growing on it; but even that had stopped, because the low island had several times been flooded by the sea. and in midsummer too, so that the growth of grass was stunted and made useless as a sheep pasture. So it happened that the island had no more visitors except gulls and other birds and occasionally a sea

eagle; and on moonlight nights from the dike one could only see the light or heavy mists pass over it. And people believed that, when the moon shone upon the island from the east, they could recognise a few bleached skeletons of drowned sheep and that of a horse, although, to be sure, no one could understand how it had come there.

It was at the end of March that the day laborer from the house of Tede Haien and Iven Johns, the hired man of the young dikemaster, stood beside each other at that place and without stirring stared at the island which could scarcely be recognised in the dim moonshine; but something out of the ordinary seemed to hold them there. The laborer put his hands into his pockets and shuddered: "Come, Iven," he said; "there's nothing good in that; let us go home."

The other laughed, even though horror sounded through his laughter: "Oh, bosh, it's a live creature, a big one! Who the devil has chased it on to the clay out there? Look, now it's stretching its neck our way! No, it's drooping its head; it is feeding. I'd have thought, there was nothing to feed on there! What can it be?"

"That's not our business!" replied the other. "Good night, Iven, if you don't want to go with me; I'm going home!"

"Oh, yes; you've got a wife, you can go into your warm bed! But I've got a lot of March air in my room!"

"Good night, then," the laborer called back, as he marched home on the dike. The hired man looked round a few times after his fleeing companion; but the desire to see something gruesome held him fast. Then a dark, stocky figure came toward him on the dike from the village; it was the servant boy of the dikemaster. "What do you want, Carsten?" the hired man called to him.

"I?—nothing," said the boy; "but our master wants to speak to you, Iven Johns."

The man's eyes were drawn back to the island again. "All right, I'm coming right off," he said.

"What are you looking at so?" asked the boy.

The man raised his arm and pointed silently to the island. "Oh, look!" whispered the boy; "there goes a horse—a white horse—the devil must be riding that—how can a horse get to Jevers Island?"

"Don't know, Carsten; if it's only a real horse!"

"Yes, yes, Iven; look, now it's feeding just like a horse! But who has brought it there—we have no boats in the village big enough! Perhaps it's only a sheep; Peter Ohm says by moonlight ten circles of peat look like a whole village. No, look! Now it's jumping around—it must be a horse, after all!"

Both stood silent for a while, their eyes fixed on what they saw indistinctly going on upon yonder island. The moon stood high in the heavens and shone upon the wide sea that was just beginning, as the tide rose, to wash with its waters over the glistening flats of clay. Only the low murmur of the water, not the sound of a single animal was heard here in the vast open; on the marshes behind the dike, too, all was deserted, and cows and oxen were still in their stalls. Nothing stirred; only the thing that they took for a horse—a white horse—seemed to be moving on Jevers Island.

"It is growing lighter," the hired man broke into the silence; "I can see the white sheeps' skeletons shimmer distinctly!"

"I too," said the boy and stretched his neck; but then, as if it came over him suddenly, he pulled the man by the sleeve. "Iven," he gasped, "the horse skeleton, that used to lie there too—where is that? I can't see it!"

"I don't see it either. Strange!" said the man.

"Not so strange, Iven! Sometimes, I don't know in what nights, the bones are supposed to rise and act as if they were alive!"

"Is that so?" said the man; "that's an old wives' story!"

"May be, Iven," said the boy.

"But I thought you were sent to get me. Come, we have to go home. It always stays the same, anyway."

The man could not get the boy away until he had turned him round by force and pushed him on to the way. "Listen, Carsten," said the former, when the ghostly island lay a good way behind him, "you are supposed to be a good sport; I believe you would like to inspect these doings yourself."

"Yes," replied Carsten, still shuddering a little. "Yes, I'd like to do that, Iven."

"Do you really mean that? Then," said the man after he had given his hand to the boy emphatically, "we'll take our

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"Do you really mean that? Then," said the man after he had given his hand to the boy emphatically, "we'll take our

boat to-morrow evening; you row to Jeverssand; I'll stay on the dike in the meantime."

"Yes," replied the boy, "that'll work! I'll take my whip with me."

"Do that."

Silently they came near the house of their employers, to which they slowly climbed up the high hill.

At the same hour on the following night the hired man sat on the big stone in front of the stable door, when the boy came to him, snapping his whip. "What a strange sound!" said the former.

"I should say—take care!" returned the boy; "I have stuck nails into the string, too."

"Then come," said the other.

As on the night before, the moon stood in the eastern sky and looked down with a clear light. Soon both were out on the dike again and looked over to Jevers Island, that looked like a strip of mist in the water. "There it goes again," said the man; "I was here in the afternoon, and then it wasn't there; but I saw the white horse skeleton lying there distinctly!"

The boy stretched his neck: "That isn't there now, Iven," he whispered.

"Well, Carsten, how is it?" said the man. "Are you still keen on rowing over?"

Carsten stopped to think a moment; then he struck the air with his whip: "Go ahead and slip the mooring, Iven."

But over yonder it seemed as if the creature moving there were stretching its neck and raising its head toward the mainland. They were not seeing it any more; they were already walking down the dike to the place where the boat was moored. "Now get in," said the man, after he had slipped the mooring. "I'll wait till you are back. You'll have to land on the eastern side; that's where one always could land." And the boy nodded silently and rowed away into the moonlit night with his whip; the man wandered back to the foot of the dike and climbed on to it again at the place where they had stood before. Soon he saw how the boat was moored at a steep, dark place, where a broad creek flowed out, and how a stocky figure leaped ashore.

Didn't it seem as if the boy were snapping his whip? But then, too, it might be the sound of the rising flood. Several hundred feet to the north he saw what they had taken for a white horse; and now—yes, the figure of the boy came marching straight up to it. Now it raised its head as if it were startled; and the boy—now one could hear it plainly—snapped his whip. But—what was he doing? He was turning round, he was going back the same way he had come. The creature over there seemed to graze on unceasingly; no sound of neighing could be heard; sometimes it seemed as if strips of water were drawn across the apparition. The man gazed as if spellbound.

Then he heard the arrival of the boat at the shore he was on, and soon in the dusk he saw the boy climb toward him up the dike. "Well, Carsten," he asked, "what was it?"

The boy shook his head. "It was nothing!" he said. "From the boat I saw it a short way off; but then, when I was on the island—the devil knows where that animal has hid himself? The moonlight was bright enough; but when I came to that place there was nothing there but the pale bones of a half dozen sheep, and a little farther away lay the horse skeleton, too, with its white, long skull and let the moon shine into its empty sockets."

"Hm!" replied the man; "are you sure you saw right?"

"Yes, Iven, I stood in the place; a forlorn bird that had cowered behind the skeleton for the night flew up screaming so that I was startled and snapped my whip after it a few times."

"And that was all?"

"Yes, Iven; I don't know any more."

"It is enough, too," said the man, then he pulled the boy toward him by the arm and pointed over to the island. "Do you see something over there, Carsten?"

"It's true, there it goes again."

"Again?" said the man; "I've been looking over there all the time, and it hasn't been away at all; you went right up to the monster."

The boy stared at him; all at once horror was in his usually so pert face, and this did not escape the man. "Come," said the latter, "let's go home: from here it looks alive and

over there is nothing but bones—that's more than you and I can grasp. But keep quiet about it, one mustn't talk of these things."

They turned round and the boy trotted beside him; they did not speak, and by their side the marshes lay in perfect silence.

But when the moon had vanished and the nights were black, something else happened.

At the time when the horse market was going on Hauke Haien had ridden into the city, although he had had nothing to do with the market. Nevertheless, when he came home toward evening, he brought home a second horse. It had rough hair, however, and was lean, so that one could count every rib and its eyes looked tired and sunken deep into the sockets. Elke had stepped out in front of the house door to meet her husband: "Heaven help us!" she cried, "what shall we do with that old white horse?" For when Hauke had ridden up to the house with it and stopped under the ash tree, she had seen that the poor creature was lame, too.

The young dikemaster, however, jumped laughing down from his brown horse: "Never mind, Elke; it didn't cost much, anyway."

The clever woman replied: "You know, the greatest bargain turns out to be the most expensive."

"But not always, Elke; this animal is at most four years old; look at it more carefully. It is starved and has been abused; our oats shall do it good. I'll take care of it myself, so that they won't overfeed it."

Meanwhile the animal stood with bowed head; its long mane hung down its neck. Elke, while her husband was calling the hired men, walked round it with curious eyes; but she shook her head: "A horse like this has never yet been in our stable"

When the servant boy came round the corner, he suddenly stood still with frightened eyes. "Well, Carsten," called the dikemaster, "what has struck you? Don't you like my white horse?"

"Yes—oh, yes, master, why not?"

"Then take the animal into the stable; don't feed it. I'll come myself right off."

The boy took hold of the halter of the white horse carefully and then hastily, as if for protection, seized the bridle of the brown horse also put into his trust. Hauke then went into the room with his wife. She had warm beer ready for him, and bread and butter were there, too.

He had soon finished; then he got up and walked up and down the room with his wife. "Let me tell you, Elke," he said, while the evening glow played on the tiles of the wall, "how I came to get the animal. I spent about an hour at the dikemaster general's; he has good news for me—there will be some departures, here and there, from my drawings; but the main thing, my outline, has been accepted, and the next days may bring the command to begin the new dike."

Elke sighed involuntarily. "After all?" she said, anxiously.

"Yes, wife," returned Hauke; "it will be hard work; but for that, I think, the Lord has brought us together! Our farm is in such good order now, you can take a good part of it on your own shoulders. Think ahead ten years—then we'll own quite a different property."

During his first words she had pressed her husband's hand into hers as a sign of assurance; but his last words could give her no pleasure. "For whom all the property?" she said. "You would have to take another wife then; I shall bring you no children."

Tears shot into her eyes; but he drew her close into his arms. "We'll leave that to the Lord," he said; "but now and at that time too, we are young enough to have joy for ourselves in the fruits of our labors."

She looked at him a long time with her dark eyes while he held her. "Forgive me, Hauke," she said; "sometimes I am a woman in despair."

He bent down to her face and kissed her: "You are my wife and I am your husband, Elke. And nothing can alter that."

Then she clasped her arms tightly round his neck: "You are right, Hauke, and what comes, will come for us both." Then she freed him, blushing. "You wanted to tell me about the white horse," she said in a low voice.

"So I did, Elke. I told you, my head and heart were full of joy over the good news that the dikemaster general had

given me. So I was riding back again out of the city, when on the dam, behind the harbor, I met a shabby fellow—I couldn't tell if he was a vagabond, a tinker, or what. This fellow was pulling the white horse after him by the halter; but the animal raised his head and looked at me with dull eyes. It seemed to me as if he wanted to beg me for something—and, indeed, at that moment I was rich enough. 'Hallo, good sir,' I hailed him, 'where do you want to go with your jade?'

"The fellow stopped, and the white horse, too. 'Sell him,' he said, and nodded to me slyly.

" 'But spare me!' I called cheerfully.

" 'I think I shall!' he said; 'it's a good horse and worth no less than a hundred dollars.

"I laughed into his face.

" 'Well,' he said, 'don't laugh so hard; you don't need to pay it. But I have no use for it, it'll perish with me; with you it would soon look different.'

"Then I jumped down from my brown horse and looked into the white horse's mouth and saw that it was still a young animal. 'How much do you want for it?' I cried, for again the horse seemed to look at me beseechingly.

" 'Sir, take it for thirty dollars,' said the fellow, and I'll give you the halter to the bargain.'

"And then, wife, I took the fellow's stretched-out brown hand, which looked almost like a claw. And so we have the white horse, and I think a good enough bargain. The only strange thing was that, when I rode away with the horses, I soon heard laughter behind me, and when I turned round my head, saw the Slovak standing with his legs apart, his arms on his back, and laughing after me like a devil.

"Oh, horror," cried Elke; "I hope that white horse will bring you nothing from his old master. May he thrive for your good, Hauke!"

"Thrive he shall, at least as far as I can make him!" And the dikemaster went into the stable, as he had told the boy a while ago.

But not only on the first night did he feed the white horse —from that time on he always did it himself and did not leave the animal out of sight. He wanted to show that he

had made a first-rate bargain; anyway, he did not want to allow any mistake. And already after a few weeks the animal's condition improved: gradually the rough hair vanished; a smooth, blue-spotted skin appeared, and one day when he led it round on the place, it walked nimbly on its steady legs. Hauke thought of the adventurous seller. "That fellow was a fool, or a knave who had stolen it," he murmured to himself. Then soon, when the horse merely heard his footsteps, it threw back its head and neighed to greet him; and now he saw too that it had, what the Arabs demand of a good horse, a spare face, out of which two fiery brown eyes were gleaming. He would lead it into its stable and put a light saddle on it; and scarcely did he sit on the saddle, when the animal uttered a neigh like a shout of delight. It sped away with him, down the hill to the road and then to the dike; but the rider sat securely, and when they had reached the top, it went more quietly, easily, as if dancing, and thrust its head to the side of the sea. He patted and stroked its smooth neck, but it no longer needed these endearments, the horse seemed altogether to be one with the rider, and after he had ridden a distance northwards out on the dike, he turned it easily and reached the farm again.

The men stood at the foot of the hill and waited for the return of their master. "Now, John," he cried, as he leaped down from his horse, "you ride it to the fens where the others are; it'll carry you like a cradle."

The white horse shook its head and neighed aloud over the sunny marshes, while the hired man was taking off the saddle and the boy ran with it to the harness-room; then it laid its head on its master's shoulder and suffered him to caress it. But when the hired man wanted to swing himself on its back, it leaped to the side with a sudden bound and then stood motionless, turning its beautiful eyes on its master. "Hallo, Iven," cried Hauke, "has he hurt you?" and he tried to help his man up from the ground.

The latter was busily rubbing his hip: "No, sir, I can manage still; but let the devil ride that white horse!"

"And me!" Hauke added, laughing. "Then bring him to the fens by the bridle."

"And when the man obeyed, somewhat humiliated, the white horse meekly let itself be led.

A few evenings later the man and the boy stood together in front of the stable door. The sunset gleam had vanished behind the dike, the land it enclosed was already wrapped in twilight; only at rare intervals from far off one could hear the lowing of a startled bull or the scream of a lark whose life was ending through the assault of a weasel or a water rat. The man was leaning against the doorpost and smoking his short pipe, from which he could no longer see the smoke; he and the boy had not yet talked together. Something weighed on the boy's soul, however, but he did not know how to begin with the silent man. "Iven," he said finally, "you know that horse skeleton on Jeverssand."

"What about it?" asked the man.

"Yes, Iven, what about it? It isn't there any more—neither by day nor by moonlight; I've run up to the dike about twenty times."

"The old bones have tumbled to pieces, I suppose," said Iven and calmly smoked on.

"But I was out there by moonlight, too; nothing is moving over there on Jeverssand, either!"

"Why yes!" said the man, "if the bones have fallen apart, it won't be able to get up any more."

"Don't joke, Iven! I know now; I can tell you where it is."

The man turned to him suddenly: "Well, where is it, then?"

"Where?" repeated the boy emphatically. "It is standing in our stable; there it has been standing, ever since it was no more on the island. It isn't for nothing that our master always feeds it himself; I know about it, Iven."

For a while the man puffed away violently into the night. "You're not right in your mind, Carsten," he said then; "our white horse? If ever a horse was alive, that one is. How can a wide-awake youngster like you get mixed up with such an old wives' belief!"

But the boy could not be converted: if the devil was inside the white horse, why shouldn't it be alive? On the contrary, it was all the worse. He started, frightened, every

time that he stepped into the stable toward night, where the creature was sometimes kept in summer and it turned its fiery head toward him so violently. "The devil take you!" he would mutter; "we won't stay together much longer!"

So he secretly looked round for a new place, gave notice and, about All Saints' Day, went to Ole Peters as hired man. Here he found attentive listeners for his story of the dikemaster's devil's horse. Fat Mrs. Vollina and her dull-witted father, the former dike overseer, Jess Harders, listened in smug horror and afterwards told it to all who had a grudge against the dikemaster in their hearts or who took pleasure in that kind of thing.

In the mean time already at the end of March the order to begin on the new dike had arrived from the dikemaster general. Hauke first called the dike overseers together, and in the inn up by the church they had all appeared one day and listened while he read to them the main points from the documents that had been drawn up so far: points from his petition from the report of the dikemaster general, and lastly the final order in which, above all, the outline which he had proposed was accepted, so that the new dike should not be steep like the old ones, but slant gradually toward the sea. But they did not listen with cheerful or even satisfied faces.

"Well, yes," said an old dike overseer, "here we have the whole business now, and protests won't do any good, because the dikemaster general patronises our dikemaster."

"You're right, Detlev Wiens," added a second; "our spring work is waiting, and now a dike miles long is to be made—then everything will have to be left undone."

"You can finish all that this year," said Hauke; "things don't move as fast as that."

Few wanted to admit that. "But your profile," said a third, bringing up something new; "the dike will be as broad on the outside toward the water as other things are long. Where shall we get the material? When shall the work be done?"

"If not this year, then next year; that will depend chiefly on ourselves," said Hauke.

Angry laughter passed along the whole company. "But what is all that useless labor for? The dike isn't supposed to be any bigger than the old one;" cried a new voice; "and I'm sure that's stood for over thirty years."

"You are right," said Hauke, "thirty years ago the old dike broke; then backwards thirty-five years ago, and again forty-five years ago; but since then, although it is still standing steep and senseless, the highest floods have spared us. But the new dike is to stand in spite of such floods for hundreds of years; for it will not be broken through; because the gentle slope toward the sea gives the waves no point of attack, and so you will gain safe land for yourselves and your children, and that is why the government and the dikemaster general support me—and, besides, that is what you ought to be aware of for your own profit."

When the assembled were not ready on the spot to answer these words, an old white-haired man rose with difficulty from his chair. It was Elke's godfather, Jewe Manners, who, in response to Hauke's beseeching, had kept his office as dike overseer.

"Dikemaster Hauke Haien," he said, "you give us much commotion and expense, and I wish you had waited with all this until the Lord had called me to rest; but—you are right, and only unreason can deny that. We ought to thank God every day that He has kept us our precious piece of foreland against storms and the force of the tide, in spite of our idleness; now, I believe, is the eleventh hour, in which we must lend a hand and try to save it for ourselves to the best of our knowledge and powers, and not defy God's patience any longer. I, my friends, am an old man; I have seen dikes built and broken; but the dike that Hauke Haien has proposed according to his God-given insight and has carried through with the government—that dike none of you living men will see broken. And if you don't want to thank him yourselves, your grandchildren some day will not deny him his laurel wreath."

Jewe Manners sat down again; he took his blue handkerchief from his pocket and wiped a few drops from his forehead. The old man was still known as a man of efficiency and irreproachable integrity, and as the assembly was not

inclined to agree with him, it remained silent. But Hauke Haien took the floor, though all saw that he had grown pale.

"I thank you, Jewe Manners," he said, "for staying here and for what you have said. You other gentlemen, have the goodness at least to consider the building of the new dike, which indeed will be my burden, as something that cannot be helped any more, and let us decide accordingly what needs to be done."

"Speak!" said one of the overseers. And Hauke spread the map of the new dike out on the table.

"A while ago someone has asked," he began, "from where we shall get the soil? You see, as far as the foreland stretches out into the flooded district, a strip of land is left free outside of the dike line; from this we can take our soil and from the foreland which runs north and south along the dike from the new enclosed land. If we have a good layer of clay at the water side, at the inside and the middle we can take sand. Now first we have to get a surveyor to mark off the line of the new dike on the foreland. The one who helped me work out my plan will be best suited for the work. Furthermore we have to order some one-horse tip-carts at a cartwright's for the purpose of getting our clay and other material. For damming the channel and also for the inside, where we may have to use sand, we shall need—I cannot tell now how many cartloads of straw for the dike, perhaps more than can be spared in the marshes. Let us discuss then now how all this is to be acquired and arranged. The new lock here, too, on the west side toward the water will have to be given over to an efficient carpenter later for repairs."

The assembly gathered round the table, looked at the map with half attention and gradually began to talk; but it seemed as if they did it merely so that there might be some talking. When it came to the choice of a surveyor, one of the younger ones remarked: "You have thought it out, dike-master; you must know best yourself who is fit for it."

But Hauke replied: "As you are sworn men, you have to speak your own opinion, Jacob Meyen; and if you think of something better, I'll let my proposal fall."

"Oh, I guess it'll be all right," said Jacob Meyen.

But one of the older ones did not think that it would be so perfectly all right. He had a nephew, a surveyor, the like of whom had never been in the marshes, who was said to surpass the dikemaster's father, the late Tede Haien.

So there was a discussion about the two surveyors and it was finally decided to let both do the work together. There was similar disputing over the carts, the furnishing of the straw and everything else, and Hauke came home late and almost exhausted on his brown horse which he was still riding at that time. But when he sat in the old armchair, handed down from his self-important but more easy-going predecessor, his wife was quickly at his side: "You look tired, Hauke; she said and with her slender hand pushed his hair out of his forehead.

"A little, I suppose," he replied.

"And is it getting on?"

"It'll get on;" he said with a bitter smile; "but I myself have to push the wheels and have to be glad if they aren't kept back."

"But not by all?"

"No, Elke; your godfather, Jewe Manners, is a good man; I wish he were thirty years younger."

When after a few weeks the dike line had been marked off and most of the carts had been furnished, the dikemaster had gathered together in the inn by the church all the shareholders of the land to be diked in and also the owners of the land behind the old dike. He wanted to present to them a plan for the distribution of the work and the cost and to hear their possible objections; for the owners of the old land had to bear their part of the labor and the cost because the new dike and the new sluices would lessen the running expenses of the older ones. This plan had been a hard piece of work for Hauke and if he had not been given a dike messenger and a dike clerk through the mediation of the dikemaster general, he could not have accomplished it so soon, although again he was working well into the night. When he went to bed, tired to death, his wife no longer waited for him with feigned sleep; she, too, had such a full share of daily work that she lay, as if at the bottom of a deep well, in a sleep that could not be disturbed.

Now Hauke read his plan and again spread his papers out on the table—papers which, to be sure, had already lain for three days in the inn for inspection. Some serious men were present, who regarded this conscientious diligence with awe, and who, after quiet consideration, submitted to the low charge of the dikemaster. But others, whose shares in the new land had been sold either by themselves or their fathers or someone else who had bought them, complained because they had to pay part of the expenses of the new diked-in land which no longer concerned them, not thinking that through the new work the old lands would be less costly to keep up. Again there were others who were blessed with shares for the new land who clamoured that one should buy these of them for very little, because they wanted to be rid of shares that burdened them with such unreasonable labor. Ole Peters who was leaning against the doorpost with a grim face, shouted into the midst: "Think first and then trust in our dikemaster! He knows how to calculate; he already had most of the shares, then he was clever enough to get mine at a bargain, and when he had them, he decided to dike in the new land."

After these words for a moment a deadly silence fell upon the assembly. The dikemaster stood by the table where he had spread out his papers before; he raised his head and looked over to Ole Peters: "You know very well, Ole Peters," he said, "that you are libeling me; you are doing it just the same, because you know that, nevertheless, a good part of the dirt you are throwing at me will cling to me. The truth is that you wanted to be rid of your shares, and that at that time I needed them for my sheep raising. And if you want to know more I will tell you that the dirty words which escaped your lips here at the inn, namely that I was made dikemaster only on account of my wife—that they have stirred me up and I wanted to show you all that I could be dikemaster on my own account. And so, Ole Peters, I have done what the dikemaster before me ought to have done. If you are angry, though, because at that time your shares were made mine—you hear now, there are enough who want to sell theirs cheaply, because the work connected with them is too much."

There was applause from a small part of the assembled men, and old Jewe Manners, who stood among them, cried aloud: "Bravo, Hauke Haien! The Lord will let your work succeed!"

But they did not finish after all, although Ole Peters was silent, and the people did not disperse till supper time. Not until they had a second meeting was everything settled, and then only after Hauke had agreed to furnish four teams in the next month instead of the three that were his share.

At last, when the Whitsuntide bells were ringing through the land, the work had begun: unceasingly the dumpcarts were driven from the foreland to the dike line, there to dump the clay, and in the same way an equal number was driven back to get new clay from the foreland. At the line of the dike itself men stood with shovels and spades in order to put the dumped clay into its right place and to smooth it. Huge loads of straw were driven up and taken down. This straw was not only used to cover the lighter material, like sand and loose earth, which was used for the inside; gradually single pieces of the dike were finished, and the sod with which they were covered was in places securely overlaid with straw as a protection against the gnawing waves. Inspectors engaged for the purpose walked back and forth, and when it was stormy, they stood with wide open mouths and shouted their orders through wind and storm. In and out among them rode the dikemaster on his white horse, which he now used exclusively, and the animal flew back and forth with its rider, while he gave his orders quickly and drily, praised the workmen, or, as it happened sometimes, dismissed a lazy or clumsy man without mercy. "That can't be helped!" he would cry; "we can't have the dike spoiled on account of your laziness!" From far, when he came up from the enclosed land below, they heard the snorting of his horse, and all hands went to work more briskly. "Come on, get to work! There's the rider on the white horse!"

During breakfast time, when the workmen sat together in masses on the ground, with their morning bread, Hauke rode along the deserted works, and his eyes were sharp to spy where slovenly hands had used the spade. Then when he rode up to the men and explained to them how the work

Didn't it seem as if the boy were snapping his whip? But then, too, it might be the sound of the rising flood. Several hundred feet to the north he saw what they had taken for a white horse; and now—yes, the figure of the boy came marching straight up to it. Now it raised its head as if it were startled; and the boy—now one could hear it plainly—snapped his whip. But—what was he doing? He was turning round, he was going back the same way he had come. The creature over there seemed to graze on unceasingly; no sound of neighing could be heard; sometimes it seemed as if strips of water were drawn across the apparition. The man gazed as if spellbound.

Then he heard the arrival of the boat at the shore he was on, and soon in the dusk he saw the boy climb toward him up the dike. "Well, Carsten," he asked, "what was it?"

The boy shook his head. "It was nothing!" he said. "From the boat I saw it a short way off; but then, when I was on the island—the devil knows where that animal has hid himself? The moonlight was bright enough; but when I came to that place there was nothing there but the pale bones of a half dozen sheep, and a little farther away lay the horse skeleton, too, with its white, long skull and let the moon shine into its empty sockets."

"Hm!" replied the man; "are you sure you saw right?"

"Yes, Iven, I stood in the place; a forlorn bird that had cowered behind the skeleton for the night flew up screaming so that I was startled and snapped my whip after it a few times."

"And that was all?"

"Yes, Iven; I don't know any more."

"It is enough, too," said the man, then he pulled the boy toward him by the arm and pointed over to the island. "Do you see something over there, Carsten?"

"It's true, there it goes again."

"Again?" said the man; "I've been looking over there all the time, and it hasn't been away at all; you went right up to the monster."

The boy stared at him; all at once horror was in his usually so pert face, and this did not escape the man. "Come," said the latter, "let's go home: from here it looks alive and

over there is nothing but bones—that's more than you and I can grasp. But keep quiet about it, one mustn't talk of these things."

They turned round and the boy trotted beside him; they did not speak, and by their side the marshes lay in perfect silence.

But when the moon had vanished and the nights were black, something else happened.

At the time when the horse market was going on Hauke Haien had ridden into the city, although he had had nothing to do with the market. Nevertheless, when he came home toward evening, he brought home a second horse. It had rough hair, however, and was lean, so that one could count every rib and its eyes looked tired and sunken deep into the sockets. Elke had stepped out in front of the house door to meet her husband: "Heaven help us!" she cried, "what shall we do with that old white horse?" For when Hauke had ridden up to the house with it and stopped under the ash tree, she had seen that the poor creature was lame, too.

The young dikemaster, however, jumped laughing down from his brown horse: "Never mind, Elke; it didn't cost much, anyway."

The clever woman replied: "You know, the greatest bargain turns out to be the most expensive."

"But not always, Elke; this animal is at most four years old; look at it more carefully. It is starved and has been abused; our oats shall do it good. I'll take care of it myself, so that they won't overfeed it."

Meanwhile the animal stood with bowed head; its long mane hung down its neck. Elke, while her husband was calling the hired men, walked round it with curious eyes; but she shook her head: "A horse like this has never yet been in our stable"

When the servant boy came round the corner, he suddenly stood still with frightened eyes. "Well, Carsten," called the dikemaster, "what has struck you? Don't you like my white horse?"

"Yes—oh, yes, master, why not?"

"Then take the animal into the stable; don't feed it. I'll come myself right off."

The boy took hold of the halter of the white horse carefully and then hastily, as if for protection, seized the bridle of the brown horse also put into his trust. Hauke then went into the room with his wife. She had warm beer ready for him, and bread and butter were there, too.

He had soon finished; then he got up and walked up and down the room with his wife. "Let me tell you, Elke," he said, while the evening glow played on the tiles of the wall, "how I came to get the animal. I spent about an hour at the dikemaster general's; he has good news for me—there will be some departures, here and there, from my drawings; but the main thing, my outline, has been accepted, and the next days may bring the command to begin the new dike."

Elke sighed involuntarily. "After all?" she said, anxiously.

"Yes, wife," returned Hauke; "it will be hard work; but for that, I think, the Lord has brought us together! Our farm is in such good order now, you can take a good part of it on your own shoulders. Think ahead ten years—then we'll own quite a different property."

During his first words she had pressed her husband's hand into hers as a sign of assurance; but his last words could give her no pleasure. "For whom all the property?" she said. "You would have to take another wife then; I shall bring you no children."

Tears shot into her eyes; but he drew her close into his arms. "We'll leave that to the Lord," he said; "but now and at that time too, we are young enough to have joy for ourselves in the fruits of our labors."

She looked at him a long time with her dark eyes while he held her. "Forgive me, Hauke," she said; "sometimes I am a woman in despair."

He bent down to her face and kissed her: "You are my wife and I am your husband, Elke. And nothing can alter that."

Then she clasped her arms tightly round his neck: "You are right, Hauke, and what comes, will come for us both." Then she freed him, blushing. "You wanted to tell me about the white horse," she said in a low voice.

"So I did, Elke. I told you, my head and heart were full of joy over the good news that the dikemaster general had

given me. So I was riding back again out of the city, when on the dam, behind the harbor, I met a shabby fellow—I couldn't tell if he was a vagabond, a tinker, or what. This fellow was pulling the white horse after him by the halter; but the animal raised his head and looked at me with dull eyes. It seemed to me as if he wanted to beg me for something—and, indeed, at that moment I was rich enough. 'Hallo, good sir,' I hailed him, 'where do you want to go with your jade?'

"The fellow stopped, and the white horse, too. 'Sell him,' he said, and nodded to me slyly.

"'But spare me!' I called cheerfully.

"'I think I shall!' he said; 'it's a good horse and worth no less than a hundred dollars.

"I laughed into his face.

"'Well,' he said, 'don't laugh so hard; you don't need to pay it. But I have no use for it, it'll perish with me; with you it would soon look different.'

"Then I jumped down from my brown horse and looked into the white horse's mouth and saw that it was still a young animal. 'How much do you want for it?' I cried, for again the horse seemed to look at me beseechingly.

"'Sir, take it for thirty dollars,' said the fellow, and I'll give you the halter to the bargain.'

"And then, wife, I took the fellow's stretched-out brown hand, which looked almost like a claw. And so we have the white horse, and I think a good enough bargain. The only strange thing was that, when I rode away with the horses, I soon heard laughter behind me, and when I turned round my head, saw the Slovak standing with his legs apart, his arms on his back, and laughing after me like a devil.

"Oh, horror," cried Elke; "I hope that white horse will bring you nothing from his old master. May he thrive for your good, Hauke!"

"Thrive he shall, at least as far as I can make him!" And the dikemaster went into the stable, as he had told the boy a while ago.

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" 'I think I shall!' he said; 'it's a good horse and worth no less than a hundred dollars.

"I laughed into his face.

" 'Well,' he said, 'don't laugh so hard; you don't need to pay it. But I have no use for it, it'll perish with me; with you it would soon look different.'

"Then I jumped down from my brown horse and looked into the white horse's mouth and saw that it was still a young animal. 'How much do you want for it?' I cried, for again the horse seemed to look at me beseechingly.

" 'Sir, take it for thirty dollars,' said the fellow, and I'll give you the halter to the bargain.'

"And then, wife, I took the fellow's stretched-out brown hand, which looked almost like a claw. And so we have the white horse, and I think a good enough bargain. The only strange thing was that, when I rode away with the horses, I soon heard laughter behind me, and when I turned round my head, saw the Slovak standing with his legs apart, his arms on his back, and laughing after me like a devil.

"Oh, horror," cried Elke; "I hope that white horse will bring you nothing from his old master. May he thrive for your good, Hauke!"

"Thrive he shall, at least as far as I can make him!" And the dikemaster went into the stable, as he had told the boy a while ago.

But not only on the first night did he feed the white horse —from that time on he always did it himself and did not leave the animal out of sight. He wanted to show that he

The boy took hold of the halter of the white horse carefully and then hastily, as if for protection, seized the bridle of the brown horse also put into his trust. Hauke then went into the room with his wife. She had warm beer ready for him, and bread and butter were there, too.

He had soon finished; then he got up and walked up and down the room with his wife. "Let me tell you, Elke," he said, while the evening glow played on the tiles of the wall, "how I came to get the animal. I spent about an hour at the dikemaster general's; he has good news for me—there will be some departures, here and there, from my drawings; but the main thing, my outline, has been accepted, and the next days may bring the command to begin the new dike."

Elke sighed involuntarily. "After all?" she said, anxiously.

"Yes, wife," returned Hauke; "it will be hard work; but for that, I think, the Lord has brought us together! Our farm is in such good order now, you can take a good part of it on your own shoulders. Think ahead ten years—then we'll own quite a different property."

During his first words she had pressed her husband's hand into hers as a sign of assurance; but his last words could give her no pleasure. "For whom all the property?" she said. "You would have to take another wife then; I shall bring you no children."

Tears shot into her eyes; but he drew her close into his arms. "We'll leave that to the Lord," he said; "but now and at that time too, we are young enough to have joy for ourselves in the fruits of our labors."

She looked at him a long time with her dark eyes while he held her. "Forgive me, Hauke," she said; "sometimes I am a woman in despair."

He bent down to her face and kissed her: "You are my wife and I am your husband, Elke. And nothing can alter that."

Then she clasped her arms tightly round his neck: "You are right, Hauke, and what comes, will come for us both." Then she freed him, blushing. "You wanted to tell me about the white horse," she said in a low voice.

"So I did, Elke. I told you, my head and heart were full of joy over the good news that the dikemaster general had

given me. So I was riding back again out of the city, when on the dam, behind the harbor, I met a shabby fellow—I couldn't tell if he was a vagabond, a tinker, or what. This fellow was pulling the white horse after him by the halter; but the animal raised his head and looked at me with dull eyes. It seemed to me as if he wanted to beg me for something—and, indeed, at that moment I was rich enough. 'Hallo, good sir,' I hailed him, 'where do you want to go with your jade?'

"The fellow stopped, and the white horse, too. 'Sell him,' he said, and nodded to me slyly.

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But not only on the first night did he feed the white horse —from that time on he always did it himself and did not leave the animal out of sight. He wanted to show that he

had made a first-rate bargain; anyway, he did not want to allow any mistake. And already after a few weeks the animal's condition improved: gradually the rough hair vanished; a smooth, blue-spotted skin appeared, and one day when he led it round on the place, it walked nimbly on its steady legs. Hauke thought of the adventurous seller. "That fellow was a fool, or a knave who had stolen it," he murmured to himself. Then soon, when the horse merely heard his footsteps, it threw back its head and neighed to greet him; and now he saw too that it had, what the Arabs demand of a good horse, a spare face, out of which two fiery brown eyes were gleaming. He would lead it into its stable and put a light saddle on it; and scarcely did he sit on the saddle, when the animal uttered a neigh like a shout of delight. It sped away with him, down the hill to the road and then to the dike; but the rider sat securely, and when they had reached the top, it went more quietly, easily, as if dancing, and thrust its head to the side of the sea. He patted and stroked its smooth neck, but it no longer needed these endearments, the horse seemed altogether to be one with the rider, and after he had ridden a distance northwards out on the dike, he turned it easily and reached the farm again.

The men stood at the foot of the hill and waited for the return of their master. "Now, John," he cried, as he leaped down from his horse, "you ride it to the fens where the others are; it'll carry you like a cradle."

The white horse shook its head and neighed aloud over the sunny marshes, while the hired man was taking off the saddle and the boy ran with it to the harness-room; then it laid its head on its master's shoulder and suffered him to caress it. But when the hired man wanted to swing himself on its back, it leaped to the side with a sudden bound and then stood motionless, turning its beautiful eyes on its master. "Hallo, Iven," cried Hauke, "has he hurt you?" and he tried to help his man up from the ground.

The latter was busily rubbing his hip: "No, sir, I can manage still; but let the devil ride that white horse!"

"And me!" Hauke added, laughing. "Then bring him to the fens by the bridle."

"And when the man obeyed, somewhat humiliated, the white horse meekly let itself be led.

A few evenings later the man and the boy stood together in front of the stable door. The sunset gleam had vanished behind the dike, the land it enclosed was already wrapped in twilight; only at rare intervals from far off one could hear the lowing of a startled bull or the scream of a lark whose life was ending through the assault of a weasel or a water rat. The man was leaning against the doorpost and smoking his short pipe, from which he could no longer see the smoke; he and the boy had not yet talked together. Something weighed on the boy's soul, however, but he did not know how to begin with the silent man. "Iven," he said finally, "you know that horse skeleton on Jeverssand."

"What about it?" asked the man.

"Yes, Iven, what about it? It isn't there any more—neither by day nor by moonlight; I've run up to the dike about twenty times."

"The old bones have tumbled to pieces, I suppose," said Iven and calmly smoked on.

"But I was out there by moonlight, too; nothing is moving over there on Jeverssand, either!"

"Why yes!" said the man, "if the bones have fallen apart, it won't be able to get up any more."

"Don't joke, Iven! I know now; I can tell you where it is."

The man turned to him suddenly: "Well, where is it, then?"

"Where?" repeated the boy emphatically. "It is standing in our stable; there it has been standing, ever since it was no more on the island. It isn't for nothing that our master always feeds it himself; I know about it, Iven."

For a while the man puffed away violently into the night. "You're not right in your mind, Carsten," he said then; "our white horse? If ever a horse was alive, that one is. How can a wide-awake youngster like you get mixed up with such an old wives' belief!"

But the boy could not be converted: if the devil was inside the white horse, why shouldn't it be alive? On the contrary, it was all the worse. He started, frightened, every

time that he stepped into the stable toward night, where the creature was sometimes kept in summer and it turned its fiery head toward him so violently. "The devil take you!" he would mutter; "we won't stay together much longer!"

So he secretly looked round for a new place, gave notice and, about All Saints' Day, went to Ole Peters as hired man. Here he found attentive listeners for his story of the dikemaster's devil's horse. Fat Mrs. Vollina and her dull-witted father, the former dike overseer, Jess Harders, listened in smug horror and afterwards told it to all who had a grudge against the dikemaster in their hearts or who took pleasure in that kind of thing.

In the mean time already at the end of March the order to begin on the new dike had arrived from the dikemaster general. Hauke first called the dike overseers together, and in the inn up by the church they had all appeared one day and listened while he read to them the main points from the documents that had been drawn up so far: points from his petition from the report of the dikemaster general, and lastly the final order in which, above all, the outline which he had proposed was accepted, so that the new dike should not be steep like the old ones, but slant gradually toward the sea. But they did not listen with cheerful or even satisfied faces.

"Well, yes," said an old dike overseer, "here we have the whole business now, and protests won't do any good, because the dikemaster general patronises our dikemaster."

"You're right, Detlev Wiens," added a second; "our spring work is waiting, and now a dike miles long is to be made—then everything will have to be left undone."

"You can finish all that this year," said Hauke; "things don't move as fast as that."

Few wanted to admit that. "But your profile," said a third, bringing up something new; "the dike will be as broad on the outside toward the water as other things are long. Where shall we get the material? When shall the work be done?"

"If not this year, then next year; that will depend chiefly on ourselves," said Hauke.

Angry laughter passed along the whole company. "But what is all that useless labor for? The dike isn't supposed to be any bigger than the old one;" cried a new voice; "and I'm sure that's stood for over thirty years."

"You are right," said Hauke, "thirty years ago the old dike broke; then backwards thirty-five years ago, and again forty-five years ago; but since then, although it is still standing steep and senseless, the highest floods have spared us. But the new dike is to stand in spite of such floods for hundreds of years; for it will not be broken through; because the gentle slope toward the sea gives the waves no point of attack, and so you will gain safe land for yourselves and your children, and that is why the government and the dikemaster general support me—and, besides, that is what you ought to be aware of for your own profit."

When the assembled were not ready on the spot to answer these words, an old white-haired man rose with difficulty from his chair. It was Elke's godfather, Jewe Manners, who, in response to Hauke's beseeching, had kept his office as dike overseer.

"Dikemaster Hauke Haien," he said, "you give us much commotion and expense, and I wish you had waited with all this until the Lord had called me to rest; but—you are right, and only unreason can deny that. We ought to thank God every day that He has kept us our precious piece of foreland against storms and the force of the tide, in spite of our idleness; now, I believe, is the eleventh hour, in which we must lend a hand and try to save it for ourselves to the best of our knowledge and powers, and not defy God's patience any longer. I, my friends, am an old man; I have seen dikes built and broken; but the dike that Hauke Haien has proposed according to his God-given insight and has carried through with the government—that dike none of you living men will see broken. And if you don't want to thank him yourselves, your grandchildren some day will not deny him his laurel wreath."

Jewe Manners sat down again; he took his blue handkerchief from his pocket and wiped a few drops from his forehead. The old man was still known as a man of efficiency and irreproachable integrity, and as the assembly was not

inclined to agree with him, it remained silent. But Hauke Haien took the floor, though all saw that he had grown pale.

"I thank you, Jewe Manners," he said, "for staying here and for what you have said. You other gentlemen, have the goodness at least to consider the building of the new dike, which indeed will be my burden, as something that cannot be helped any more, and let us decide accordingly what needs to be done."

"Speak!" said one of the overseers. And Hauke spread the map of the new dike out on the table.

"A while ago someone has asked," he began, "from where we shall get the soil? You see, as far as the foreland stretches out into the flooded district, a strip of land is left free outside of the dike line; from this we can take our soil and from the foreland which runs north and south along the dike from the new enclosed land. If we have a good layer of clay at the water side, at the inside and the middle we can take sand. Now first we have to get a surveyor to mark off the line of the new dike on the foreland. The one who helped me work out my plan will be best suited for the work. Furthermore we have to order some one-horse tip-carts at a cartwright's for the purpose of getting our clay and other material. For damming the channel and also for the inside, where we may have to use sand, we shall need—I cannot tell now how many cartloads of straw for the dike, perhaps more than can be spared in the marshes. Let us discuss then now how all this is to be acquired and arranged. The new lock here, too, on the west side toward the water will have to be given over to an efficient carpenter later for repairs."

The assembly gathered round the table, looked at the map with half attention and gradually began to talk; but it seemed as if they did it merely so that there might be some talking. When it came to the choice of a surveyor, one of the younger ones remarked: "You have thought it out, dike-master; you must know best yourself who is fit for it."

But Hauke replied: "As you are sworn men, you have to speak your own opinion, Jacob Meyen; and if you think of something better, I'll let my proposal fall."

"Oh, I guess it'll be all right," said Jacob Meyen.

But one of the older ones did not think that it would be so perfectly all right. He had a nephew, a surveyor, the like of whom had never been in the marshes, who was said to surpass the dikemaster's father, the late Tede Haien.

So there was a discussion about the two surveyors and it was finally decided to let both do the work together. There was similar disputing over the carts, the furnishing of the straw and everything else, and Hauke came home late and almost exhausted on his brown horse which he was still riding at that time. But when he sat in the old armchair, handed down from his self-important but more easy-going predecessor, his wife was quickly at his side: "You look tired, Hauke; she said and with her slender hand pushed his hair out of his forehead.

"A little, I suppose," he replied.

"And is it getting on?"

"It'll get on;" he said with a bitter smile; "but I myself have to push the wheels and have to be glad if they aren't kept back."

"But not by all?"

"No, Elke; your godfather, Jewe Manners, is a good man; I wish he were thirty years younger."

When after a few weeks the dike line had been marked off and most of the carts had been furnished, the dikemaster had gathered together in the inn by the church all the shareholders of the land to be diked in and also the owners of the land behind the old dike. He wanted to present to them a plan for the distribution of the work and the cost and to hear their possible objections; for the owners of the old land had to bear their part of the labor and the cost because the new dike and the new sluices would lessen the running expenses of the older ones. This plan had been a hard piece of work for Hauke and if he had not been given a dike messenger and a dike clerk through the mediation of the dikemaster general, he could not have accomplished it so soon, although again he was working well into the night. When he went to bed, tired to death, his wife no longer waited for him with feigned sleep; she, too, had such a full share of daily work that she lay, as if at the bottom of a deep well, in a sleep that could not be disturbed.

Now Hauke read his plan and again spread his papers out on the table—papers which, to be sure, had already lain for three days in the inn for inspection. Some serious men were present, who regarded this conscientious diligence with awe, and who, after quiet consideration, submitted to the low charge of the dikemaster. But others, whose shares in the new land had been sold either by themselves or their fathers or someone else who had bought them, complained because they had to pay part of the expenses of the new diked-in land which no longer concerned them, not thinking that through the new work the old lands would be less costly to keep up. Again there were others who were blessed with shares for the new land who clamoured that one should buy these of them for very little, because they wanted to be rid of shares that burdened them with such unreasonable labor. Ole Peters who was leaning against the doorpost with a grim face, shouted into the midst: "Think first and then trust in our dikemaster! He knows how to calculate; he already had most of the shares, then he was clever enough to get mine at a bargain, and when he had them, he decided to dike in the new land."

After these words for a moment a deadly silence fell upon the assembly. The dikemaster stood by the table where he had spread out his papers before; he raised his head and looked over to Ole Peters: "You know very well, Ole Peters," he said, "that you are libeling me; you are doing it just the same, because you know that, nevertheless, a good part of the dirt you are throwing at me will cling to me. The truth is that you wanted to be rid of your shares, and that at that time I needed them for my sheep raising. And if you want to know more I will tell you that the dirty words which escaped your lips here at the inn, namely that I was made dikemaster only on account of my wife—that they have stirred me up and I wanted to show you all that I could be dikemaster on my own account. And so, Ole Peters, I have done what the dikemaster before me ought to have done. If you are angry, though, because at that time your shares were made mine—you hear now, there are enough who want to sell theirs cheaply, because the work connected with them is too much."

There was applause from a small part of the assembled men, and old Jewe Manners, who stood among them, cried aloud: "Bravo, Hauke Haien! The Lord will let your work succeed!"

But they did not finish after all, although Ole Peters was silent, and the people did not disperse till supper time. Not until they had a second meeting was everything settled, and then only after Hauke had agreed to furnish four teams in the next month instead of the three that were his share.

At last, when the Whitsuntide bells were ringing through the land, the work had begun: unceasingly the dumpcarts were driven from the foreland to the dike line, there to dump the clay, and in the same way an equal number was driven back to get new clay from the foreland. At the line of the dike itself men stood with shovels and spades in order to put the dumped clay into its right place and to smooth it. Huge loads of straw were driven up and taken down. This straw was not only used to cover the lighter material, like sand and loose earth, which was used for the inside; gradually single pieces of the dike were finished, and the sod with which they were covered was in places securely overlaid with straw as a protection against the gnawing waves. Inspectors engaged for the purpose walked back and forth, and when it was stormy, they stood with wide open mouths and shouted their orders through wind and storm. In and out among them rode the dikemaster on his white horse, which he now used exclusively, and the animal flew back and forth with its rider, while he gave his orders quickly and drily, praised the workmen, or, as it happened sometimes, dismissed a lazy or clumsy man without mercy. "That can't be helped!" he would cry; "we can't have the dike spoiled on account of your laziness!" From far, when he came up from the enclosed land below, they heard the snorting of his horse, and all hands went to work more briskly. "Come on, get to work! There's the rider on the white horse!"

During breakfast time, when the workmen sat together in masses on the ground, with their morning bread, Hauke rode along the deserted works, and his eyes were sharp to spy where slovenly hands had used the spade. Then when he rode up to the men and explained to them how the work

ought to be done, they would look up at him and keep on chewing their bread patiently; but he never heard a word of assent or even any remark. Once at this time of day, though rather late, when he had found the work on a part of the dike particularly well done, he rode to the nearest assembly of breakfasting men, jumped down from his white horse and asked cheerfully who had done such a neat day's work. But they only looked at him shyly and sombrely and only slowly, as if against their will, a few names were given. The man to whom he had given his horse, which stood as meekly as a lamb, held it with both hands and looked as if he were frightened at the animal's beautiful eyes fixed, as usual, upon its master.

"Well, Marten," Hauke called to him; "why do you stand there as if you had been thunderstruck?"

"Sir, your horse is so calm, as if it were planning something bad!"

Hauke laughed and took the horse by the reins himself, when immediately it rubbed its head caressingly against his shoulder. Some of the workmen looked shyly at horse and rider, others ate their morning meal silently, as if all this were no concern of theirs, and now and then threw a crumb to the gulls who had remembered this feeding place and with their slender wings almost descended on the heads of the men. For a while the dikemaster gazed absently at the begging birds as they chased with their bills the bits thrown at them; then he leaped to his saddle and rode away, without turning round to look at the men. Some of the words that now were being spoken among them sounded to him like derision. "What can that mean?" he spoke to himself. "Was Elke right when she said that all were against me? These laborers and poorer people, too, many of whom will be well off through my new dike?"

He spurred on his horse, which flew down into the enclosed land as if it were mad. To be sure, he himself knew nothing of the uncanny glamour with which the rider of the white horse had been clothed by his former servant boy; but now the people should have seen him, with his eyes staring out of his haggard face, his coat fluttering on his fiery white horse.

Thus summer and autumn had passed and until toward the end of November the work had been continued; then frost and snow had put a stop to the labors and it was decided to leave the land that was to be diked in, open. Eight feet the dike rose above the level of the land. Only where the lock was to be made on the west side toward the water, a gap had been left; the channel up in front of the old dike had not yet been touched. So the flood could make its way into the enclosed land without doing it or the new dike either any great damage. And this work of human hands was entrusted to the great God and put under His protection until the spring sun should make possible its completion.

In the mean time a happy event had been expected in the house of the dikemaster: in the ninth year of his marriage a child had been born. It was red and shrivelled and weighed seven pounds, as new-born children should when they belong, as this one did, to the female sex; only its crying was strangely muffled and did not please the wise woman. The worst of all was that on the third day Elke was seized with high childbed fever, was delirious and recognised neither her husband nor her old helper. The unbounded joy that had come over Hauke at the sight of his child had turned to sorrow. The doctor from the city was called, he sat at her bedside and felt her pulse and looked about helplessly. Hauke shook his head: "He won't help; only God can help!" He had thought out a Christianity of his own, but there was something that kept back his prayer. When the old doctor had driven away, Hauke stood by the window, staring out into the wintry day, and while the patient was screaming in her delirium, he folded his hands—he did not know whether he did so in devotion or so as not to lose himself in his terrible fear.

"The sea! The sea!" wailed the patient. "Hold me!" she screamed; "hold me, Hauke!" Then her voice sank; it sounded, as if she were crying: "Out on the sea, on the wide sea. Oh, God, I'll never see him again!"

Then he turned round and pushed the nurse from the bed; he fell on his knees, clasped his wife and drew her to his heart: "Elke, Elke, don't you know me? I am with you!"

But she only opened wide her eyes glowing with fever and looked about, as if hopelessly lost.

He laid her back on her pillows; then he pressed his hands together convulsively: "Lord, my God," he cried; "don't take her from me! Thou knowest, I cannot live without her!" Then it seemed as if a thought came to him, and he added in a lower voice: "I know well Thou canst not always do as Thou wouldst—not even Thou; Thou art all-wise; Thou must act according to Thy wisdom. Oh Lord, speak to me through a breath!"

It seemed as if there were a sudden calm. He only heard low breathing; when he turned to the bed, he saw his wife lying in a quiet sleep and the nurse looking at him with horrified eyes. He heard the door move.

"Who was that?" he asked.

"Sir, the maid Ann Grethe went out; she had brought in the warming-pan."

"Why do you look at me so in such confusion, Madame Levke?"

"I? I was frightened by your prayer; with that you can't pray death away from anybody!"

Hauke looked at her with his penetrating eyes: "Do you, too, like our Ann Grethe, go to the conventicle at the Dutch tailor Jantje's?"

"Yes, sir; we both have the living faith!"

Hauke made no reply. The practise of holding seceding conventicles, which at that time was in full swing, had also blossomed out among the Frisians. "Down-and-out" artisans and schoolmasters dismissed as drunkards played the leading parts, and girls, young and old women, lazy and lonely people went eagerly to the secret meetings at which anybody could play the priest. Of the dikemaster's household Ann Grethe and the servant boy in love with her spent their free evenings there. To be sure, Elke had not concealed her doubtful opinion of this from Hauke, but he had said that in matters of faith one ought not to interfere with anyone: this could not hurt anybody, and it was better to have them go there than to the inn for whiskey.

So he had let it be, and so he had kept silent even now. But, to be sure, people were not silent about him; the words of his prayer were spread from house to house. He had denied the omnipotence of God; what was a God without

omnipotence? He was a denier of God; that affair with the devil's horse may have something in it after all!

Hauke heard nothing of all this; his ears and eyes were open only for his wife in these days, even his child did not exist for him any more.

The old doctor came again, came every day, sometimes twice, then stayed a whole night, again wrote a prescription and Iven Johns swiftly rode with it to the apothecary. But finally the doctor's face grew more cheerful, and he nodded confidentially to the dikemaster: "She'll pull through. She'll pull through, with God's help!" And one day—whether it was because his skill had conquered her illness or because in answer to Hauke's prayer God had been able after all to find a way out of his trouble—when the doctor was alone with the patient, he spoke to her, while his old eyes smiled: "Lady, now I can safely say to you: to-day the doctor has his gala-day; things looked very darkly for you, but now you belong to us again, to the living!"

Then a flood of light streamed out of her dark eyes; "Hauke, Hauke, where are you?" she cried, and when, in response to her loud cry, he rushed into the room and to her bed, she flung her arms round his neck: "Hauke, my husband—saved! I can stay with you!" Then the old doctor pulled his silk handkerchief out of his pocket, wiped his forehead and cheeks with it and nodding left the room.

On the third evening after this day a pious speaker—it was a slippermaker who had once been dismissed by the dikemaster—spoke at the conventicle held at the Dutch tailor's, where he explained to his audience the attributes of God: "But he who denies the omnipotence of God, who says: "I know Thou canst not as Thou wouldst"—we all know the unhappy man; he weighs like a stone on the community—he has fallen off from God and seeks the enemy of God, the friend of sin, as his comforter; for the hand of man has to lean upon some staff. But you—beware of him who prays thus; his prayer is a curse!"

This too was spread from house to house. What is not spread in a small community? And it reached Hauke's ears. He said no word about it, not even to his wife; but sometimes he would embrace her violently and draw her to him-

self: "Stay faithful, Elke! Stay faithful to me!" Then her eyes would look up at him full of wonder. "Faithful to you? To whom else should I be faithful?" After a short while, however, she had understood his words. "Yes, Hauke, we are faithful to each other; not only because we need each other." Then each went his and her way to work.

So far all would have been well. But in spite of all the lively work, a loneliness had spread round him, and in his heart nestled a stubbornness and a reserved manner toward other people. Only toward his wife he was always the same, and every evening and every morning he knelt at the cradle of his child as if there he could find the place of his eternal salvation. Toward servants and workmen, however, he grew more severe; the clumsy and careless ones whom he used to instruct with quiet reproaches were now startled by his harsh address, and sometimes Elke had to make things right quietly where he had offended.

When spring came, work on the dike began again. The gap in the western dike line was closed by a temporary dike half-moon shaped on the inside and the same toward the outside, for the protection of the new lock about to be made. And as the lock grew, so the chief dike gradually acquired its height, which could be more and more quickly attained. The work of directing was not any easier for the dikemaster, as in place of Jewe Manners, Ole Peters had stepped in as dike overseer. Hauke had not cared to attempt preventing this, but now in place of the encouraging word and the corresponding friendly slap on the shoulder that he had earned from his wife's old godfather, he had to cope with the successor's secret hostility and unnecessary objections which had to be thwarted with equally unnecessary reasons. For Ole belonged to the important people, to be sure, but not to the clever ones in dike matters; besides, the "scribbling hired man" of former days was still in his way.

The brightest sky again spread over sea and marshes, and the enclosed land was once more gay with strong cattle, the bellowing of which from time to time interrupted the widespread calm. Larks sang continually high in the air,

but one was not aware of it until for the time of a heartbeat the singing had ceased. No bad weather disturbed the work, and the lock was ready with its unpainted structure of beams before it needed the protection of the temporary dike for even one night; the Lord seemed to favor the new work. Then Elke's eyes would laugh to greet her husband when he came home from the dike on his white horse. "You did turn into a good animal!" he said, and then patted the horse's smooth neck. But when he saw the child clinging round her neck, Hauke leaped down and let the tiny thing dance in his arms. Then, when the white horse would fix its brown eyes on the child, he would say: "Come here, you shall have the honor." And he would place little Wienke—for that was her Christian name—on the saddle and lead the white horse round in a circle on the hill. The old ash tree, too, sometimes had the honor; he would set the child on a swinging bough and let it rock. The mother stood in the house door with laughing eyes. But the child did not laugh; her eyes, between which there was a delicate little nose, looked a little dully into the void, and her little hands did not try to seize the small stick that her father was holding for her to take. Hauke did not pay attention to this, especially as he knew nothing about such little children. Only Elke, when she saw the bright-eyed girl on the arm of her charwoman, who had been confined at the same time with her, sometimes said with regret: "Mine isn't as far on as yours yet, Trina." And the woman, as she shook the chubby boy she held by the hand with brusque love, would cry: "Yes, madam, children are different; this one here, he stole apples out of my room before he was more than two years old." And Elke pushed the chubby boy's curls from his eyes, and then secretly pressed her quiet child to her heart.

At the beginning of October, the new lock stood solidly at the west side in the main dike, now closed on both sides. Except for the gaps by the channel, the new dike now sloped all the way round with a gentle profile toward the water and rose above the ordinary high tide by fifteen feet. From the northwestern corner one could look unhindered

past Jevers Island out over the sea. But, to be sure, the winds blew more sharply here; one's hair fluttered, and he who wanted a view from this point had to have his cap securely on his head.

Toward the end of November, when storm and rain had set in, there remained only one gap to close, the one hard by the old dike, at the bottom of which the sea water shot through the channel into the new enclosure. At both sides stood the walls of the dike; now the cleft between them had to vanish. Dry summer weather would have made the work easier; but it had to be done anyway, for a rising storm might endanger the whole work. And Hauke staked everything on accomplishing the end. Rain poured down, the wind whistled; but his lean figure on the fiery white horse rose now here, now there out of the black masses of people who were busy by the gap, above and below, on the north side of the dike. Now he was seen below beside the dump-carts that already had to go far on the foreland to get the clay; a crowded lot of these had just reached the channel in order to cast off their loads. Through the splashing of the rain and the roaring of the wind, from time to time sounded the sharp orders of the dikemaster, who wanted to rule here alone to-day. He called the carts according to their numbers and ordered back those that were crowding up. When his "Stop" sounded, then all work ceased. "Straw!" Send down a load of straw! he called to those above, and the straw from one of their loads came tumbling down on to the wet clay. Below men jumped about in it and tore it apart and called up to the others that they did not want to be buried. Again new carts came, and Hauke was up on top once more, and looked down from his white horse into the cleft below and watched them shovel and dump their loads. Then he glanced out over the sea. The wind was sharp and he saw how the edge of the water was climbing higher up the dike and that the waves rose still higher. He saw, too, that the men were drenched and could scarcely breathe during their hard work because of the wind which cut off the air right before their mouths and because of the cold rain that was pouring down on them. "Hold out, men! Hold out!" he shouted down to them. "Only one foot higher; then it'll

be enough for this flood." And through all the raging of the storm one could hear the noise of the workmen; the splashing of the masses of clay tumbling down, the rattling of the carts and the rustling of the straw let down from above went on unceasingly. In the midst of these noises, now and then, the wailing of a little yellow dog could be heard, which, shivering and forlorn, was knocked about among all the men and teams. Suddenly a scream of anguish from the little animal rose out of the cleft. Hauke looked down: he had seen the dog hurled down from above. His face suddenly flushed with rage. "Stop! Stop!" he shouted down to the carts; for the wet clay was being heaped up unceasingly.

"Why?" a rough voice bawled up from below, "not on account of the wretched brat of a dog?"

"Stop, I say!" Hauke shouted again; "bring me the dog! I don't want any crime done with our work."

But not a hand stirred; only a few spades full of tough clay were still thrown beside the howling animal. Then he spurred his white horse so that it uttered a cry and stormed down the dike, and all gave way before him. "The dog!" he shouted, "I want the dog!"

A hand slapped his shoulder gently, as if it were the hand of old Jewe Manners, but when Hauke looked round, he saw that it was only a friend of the old man's. "Take care, dikemaster!" he whispered to him. "You have no friends among these people; let this dog business be!"

The wind whistled, the rain splashed, the men had stuck their spades into the ground, some had thrown them away. Hauke bent down to the old man. "Do you want to hold my horse, Harke Jens?" he asked; and the latter scarcely had the reins in his hand when Hauke had leaped into the cleft and held the little wailing animal in his arms. Almost in the same moment he sat high in his saddle again and galloped back to the dike. He glanced swiftly over the men who stood by the teams. "Who was it?" he called. "Who threw down this creature?"

For a moment all was silent, for rage was flashing from the face of the dikemaster, and they had a superstitious fear of him. Then a muscular fellow stepped down from a team and stood before him. "I didn't do it, dikemaster," he said,

bit off a piece from his roll of tobacco, and calmly pushed it into his mouth before he went on, "but he who did it, did right; if your dike is to hold, something alive has to be put into it!"

"Something alive? From what catechism have you learned that?"

"From none, sir!" replied the fellow with a pert laugh: "our grandfathers knew that, who, I am sure, were as good Christians as you! A child is still better; if you can't get that, a dog will do!"

"You keep still with your heathen doctrines," Hauke shouted at him, "the hole would be stopped up better if you had been thrown into it!"

"Oho!" sounded from a dozen throats, and the dikemaster saw grim faces and clenched fists round him; he saw that these were no friends. The thought of his dike came over him like a sudden fear. What would happen if now all should throw down their spades? As he glanced down he again saw the friend of old Jewe Manners, who walked in and out among the workmen, talked to this one and that one, smiled at one, slapped another on the shoulder with a pleasant air—and one after another took up his spade again. After a few minutes the work was in full swing—What was it that he still wanted? The channel had to be closed and he hid the dog safely in the folds of his cloak. With a sudden decision, he turned his white horse to the next team: "Let down the straw!" he called despotically, and the teamster obeyed mechanically. Soon it rustled down into the depth, and on all sides all arms were stirring again.

This work lasted an hour longer. It was six o'clock, and deep twilight was descending; the rain had stopped. Then Hauke called the superintendents together beside his horse: "To-morrow morning at four o'clock," he said, "everybody is to be in his place; the moon will still be shining, then we'll finish with God's blessing. And one thing more," he cried, when they were about to go: "do you know this dog?" And he took the trembling creature out of his cloak.

They did not know it. Only one man said: "He has been begging round the village for days; he belongs to nobody."

"Then he is mine!" said the dikemaster. "Don't forget: to-morrow morning at four o'clock!" And he rode away.

When he came home, Ann Grethe stepped out of the door. She had on neat clothing, and the thought shot through his head that she was going to the conventicle tailor's.

"Hold out your apron!" he called to her, and as she did so automatically, he threw the little dog, all covered with clay, into the apron.

"Carry him in to little Wienke; he is to be her companion! But wash and warm him first; then you'll do a good deed, too, that will please God, for the creature is almost frozen!"

And Ann Grethe could not help obeying her master, and therefore did not get to the conventicle that day.

The next day the last cut with the spade was made on the new dike. The wind had gone down; gulls and other sea birds were flying back and forth over land and water in graceful flight. From Jevers Island one could hear like a chorus of a thousand voices the cries of the wild geese that still were making themselves at home on the coast of the North Sea, and out of the white morning mists that spread over the wide marshes, gradually rose a golden autumn day and shed its light on the new work of human hands.

After a few weeks the commissioners of the ruler came with the dikemaster general for inspection. A great banquet, the first since the funeral banquet of old Tede Volkerts, was given in the house of the dikemaster, to which all the dike overseers and the greater landowners were invited. After dinner all the carriages of the guests and of the dikemaster were made ready. The dikemaster general helped Elke into the carriage in front of which the brown horse was stamping his hoofs; then he leaped in after her and took the reins himself, for he wanted to drive the clever wife of his dikemaster himself. Then they rode merrily from the hill down to the road, then up to the new dike, and upon it all round the new enclosed land. In the mean time a light northwest wind had risen and the tide was driven against the north and west sides of the new dike. But one could not help being aware of the fact that the gentle slope made the attack of the water gentler; and praise was poured on the new dikemaster from the lips of the ruler's commissioners, so that the objec-

tions which now and then were slowly brought out by the overseers, were soon stifled by it.

This, too, passed by. But the dikemaster received another satisfaction one day as he rode along on the new dike, in quiet, self-conscious meditation. The question naturally arose in his mind why the new enclosure, which would not have had its being without him, into which he had put the sweat of his brow and his night watches, now finally was named after one of the princesses "the new Caroline-land." But it was so: on all the documents concerned with it stood the name, on some even in red Gothic letters. Then, just as he was looking up, he saw two workmen coming toward him with their tools, the one about twenty paces behind the other. "Why don't you wait!" he heard the one behind calling. The other, who was just standing by a path which led down into the new land, called to him: "Another time, Jens. I'm late; I have to dig clay here."

"Where?"

"Down here, in the Hauke-Haien-land."

He called it aloud, as he trotted down the path, as if he wanted the whole marsh below to hear it. But Hauke felt as if he were hearing his fame proclaimed; he rose from his saddle, spurred on his horse and with steady eyes looked over the wide land that lay to his left. "Hauke-Haien-land! Hauke-Haien-land!" he repeated softly; that sounded as if in all time it could not have another name. Let them defy him as they would—they could not get round his name; the name of the princess—wouldn't that soon moulder in old documents?—His white horse galloped proudly and in his ears he heard a murmur: "Hauke-Haien-land! Hauke-Haien-land!" In his thoughts the new dike almost grew into the eighth wonder of the world; in all Frisia there was not the like of it. And he let the white horse dance, for he felt as if he were standing in the midst of all the Frisians, towering over them by the height of a head, and glancing down upon all keenly and full of pity.

Gradually three years had gone by since the building of the dike. The new structure had proved its worth, the cost of repairing had been small. And now almost everywhere in the enclosed land white clover was blooming, and as one

walked over the sheltered pastures, the summer wind blew toward one a whole cloud of sweet fragrance. Thus the time had come to turn the shares, which hitherto had only been ideal, into real ones, and to allot to each shareholder the piece which he was to keep as his own. Hauke had not been slow to acquire some new shares before this; Ole Peters had kept back out of spite, and owned nothing in the new land. The distribution of the parts could not be accomplished without annoyance and quarreling; but it was done, nevertheless. This day, too, lay behind the dikemaster.

From now on he lived in a lonely way for his duties as farmer and as dikemaster and for those who were nearest to him. His old friends were no longer living, and he was not the man to make new ones. But under his roof was a peace which even the quiet child did not mar. She spoke little, the constant questioning that is so characteristic of bright children was rare with her and usually came in such a way that it was hard to answer; but her dear, simple little face almost always wore an expression of content. She had two play-fellows, and they were enough: when she wandered over the hill, the rescued little yellow dog always jumped round her, and when the dog appeared, little Wienke did not stay away long. The second companion was a pewit gull. As the dog's name was "Pearl" so the gull was called "Claus."

Claus had been installed on the farm by an aged woman. Eighty-year-old Trin Jans had not been able to keep herself any longer in her hut on the outer dike; and Elke had thought that the aged servant of her grandfather might find peaceful evening hours and a good room to die in at her home. So, half by force, she and Hauke had brought her to their farm and settled her in the little northwest room in the new barn that the dikemaster had had built beside the main house when he had enlarged his establishment. A few of the maids had been given rooms next to the old woman's and could help her at night. Along the walls she kept her old furnishings; a chest made of wood from sugar boxes, above it two coloured pictures of her lost son, then a spinning-wheel, now at rest, and a very neat canopied bed in front of which stood an unwieldy stool covered with the white fur of the defunct

Angora cat. But something alive, too, she had had about her and brought with her: that was the gull Claus, which had been attached to her and fed by her for years. To be sure, when winter came, it flew with the other gulls to the south and did not come again until the wormwood was fragrant on the shore.

The barn was a little lower down on the hill, so the old woman could not look over the dike at the sea from her window. "You keep me here as in prison, dikemaster," she muttered one day, as Hauke stepped in to see her, and she pointed with her bent finger at the fens that spread out below. "Where is Jeverssand? Above those red oxen or those black ones?"

"What do you want Jeverssand for?" asked Hauke.

"Jeverssand!" muttered the old woman. "Why, I want to see where my boy that time went to God!"

"If you want to see that," Hauke replied, "you'll have to sit up there under the ash tree. From there you can look over the whole sea."

"Yes," said the old woman; "yes, if I had your young legs, dikemaster."

This was the style of thanks the dikemaster and his wife received for some time, until all at once everything was different. The little child's head of Wienke one morning peeped in through her half-open door. "Well," called the old woman, who sat with her hands folded on her wooden stool; "what have you to tell me?"

But the child silently came nearer and looked at her constantly with its listless eyes.

"Are you the dikemaster's child?" Trin Jans asked, and as the child lowered its head as if nodding, she went on: "Then sit down here on my stool. Once it was an Angora cat—so big! But your father killed it. If it were still alive, you could ride on it."

Wienke silently turned her eyes to the white fur; then she knelt down and began to stroke it with her little hands as children are wont to do with live cats or dogs. "Poor cat!" she said then and went on with her caresses.

"Well," cried the old woman after a while, "now that's enough; and you can sit on him to-day, too. Perhaps your

father only killed him for that." Then she lifted up the child by both arms and set it down roughly on the stool. But when it remained sitting there, silent and motionless and only kept looking at her, she began to shake her head. "Thou art punishing him, Lord God! Yes, yes, Thou art punishing him!" she murmured. But pity for the child seemed to come over her; she stroked its scanty hair with her bony hand, and the eyes of the little girl seemed to show that this did her good.

From now on Wienke came every day to the old woman in her room. Soon she sat down on the Angora stool of her own accord, and Trin Jans put small bits of meat and bread which she always saved into the child's little hands, and made her throw them on the floor. Then the gull shot out of some corner with screams and wings spread out and pounced on the morsels. At first the great, rushing bird frightened the child and made her cry out; but soon it all happened like a game learned by heart, and her little head only had to appear in the opening of the door, when the bird rushed up to her and perched on her head and shoulders, until the old woman helped and the feeding could begin. Trin Jans who before never could bear to have anyone merely stretch out a hand after her "Claus," now patiently watched the child gradually win over the bird altogether. It willingly let itself be chased, and she carried it about in her apron. Then, when on the hill the little yellow dog would jump round her and up at the bird in jealousy, she would cry: "Don't, don't, Pearl!" and lift the gull with her little arms so high, that the bird, after setting itself free, would fly screaming over the hill, and now the dog, by jumping and caressing, would try to win its place in her arms.

When by chance Hauke's or Elke's eyes fell upon this strange four-leaved clover which, as it were, was held to the same stem only by the same defect—then they cast tender glances upon the child. But when they turned away, there remained on their faces only the pain that each carried away alone, for the saving word had not yet been spoken between them. One summer morning, when Wienke sat with the old woman and the two animals on the big stones in front of the barn door, both her parents passed by—the dikemaster lead-

ing his white horse, with the reins flung over his arm. He wanted to ride on the dike and had got his horse out of the fens himself; on the hill his wife had taken his arm. The sun shone down warmly; it was almost sultry, and now and then a gust of wind blew from the south-southeast. It seemed that her seat was uncomfortable for the child. "Wienke wants to go too!" she cried, shook the gull out of her lap and seized her father's hand.

"Then come!" said he.

But Elke cried: "In this wind? She'll fly away from you!"

"I'll hold her all right; and to-day we have warm air and jolly water; then she can see it dance!"

Then Elke ran into the house and got a shawl and a little cap for her child. "But a storm is brewing," she said; "hurry and get on your way and be back soon."

Hauke laughed: "That shan't get us!" and lifted the child to his saddle. Elke stayed a while on the hill and, shading her eyes with her hand, watched the two trot down the road and toward the dike. Trin Jan sat on the stone and murmured incomprehensible things with her lips.

The child lay motionless in her father's arms. It seemed as if it breathed with difficulty under the pressure of the sultry air. He bent down his head to her: "Well, Wienke?" he asked.

The child looked at him a while: "Father," she said, "you can do that. Can't you do everything?"

"What is it that I can do, Wienke?"

But she was silent; she seemed not to have understood her own question.

It was high tide. When they came to the dike, the reflection of the sun on the wide water flashed into her eyes, a whirlwind made the waves eddy and raised them high up, ever new waves came and beat splashing against the beach. Then, in her fear, her little hands clung round her father's fist which was holding the reins, so that the horse made a bound to the side. The pale-blue eyes looked up at Hauke in confused fright: "The water, father! The water!" she cried.

But he gently freed his hand and said: "Be calm, child; you are with your father; the water won't hurt you!"

She pushed her pale blond hair from her forehead and again dared to look upon the sea. "It won't hurt me," she said trembling; "no, tell it not to hurt us; you can do that, and then it won't do anything to us!"

"I can't do that, child," replied Hauke seriously; "but the dike on which we are riding shelters us, and this your father has thought out and has had built."

Her eyes turned upon him as if she did not quite understand that; then she buried her strikingly small head in the wide folds of her father's coat.

"Why are you hiding, Wienke?" he whispered to her; "are you afraid?" And a trembling little voice rose out of the folds of the coat: "Wienke would rather not look; but you can do everything, can't you, father?"

Distant thunder was rolling against the wind. "Hoho!" cried Hauke, "there it comes!" And he turned his horse round to ride back. "Now we want to go home to mother!"

The child drew a deep breath; but not until they had reached the hill and the house did she raise her little head from her father's breast. When Elke had taken off the little shawl and cap in the room, the child remained standing before her mother like a dumb little ninepin.

"Well, Wienke," she said, and shook her gently, "do you like the big water?"

But the child opened her eyes wide. "It talks," she said; "Wienke is afraid!"

"It doesn't talk; it only murmurs and roars!"

The child looked into the void: "Has it got legs?" she asked again; "can it come over the dike?"

"No, Wienke; your father looks out for that, he is the dikemaster."

"Yes," said the child and clapped her little hands together with an idiotic smile. "Father can do everything—everything!" Then suddenly, turning away from her mother, she cried: "Let Wienke go to Trin Jans, she has red apples!"

And Elke opened the door and let the child out. When she had closed it again, she glanced at her husband with the deepest anguish in her eyes from which hitherto he had drawn only comfort and courage that had helped him.

He gave her his hand and pressed hers, as if there were no further need for words between them; then she said in a low voice: "No, Hauke, let me speak: the child that I have borne you after years will stay a child always. Oh, good God! It is feeble-minded! I have to say it once in your hearing."

"I knew it long ago," said Hauke and held tightly his wife's hand which she wanted to draw away.

"So we are left alone after all," she said again.

But Hauke shook his head: "I love her, and she throws her little arms round me and presses close to my breast; for all the treasures of the world I wouldn't miss that!"

The woman stared ahead darkly: "But why?" she asked; "what have I, poor mother, done?"

"Yes, Elke, that I have asked, too, of Him who alone can know; but you know, too, that the Almighty gives men no answer—perhaps because we would not grasp it."

"He had seized his wife's other hand too, and gently drew her toward him. "Don't let yourself be kept from loving your child as you do; be sure it understands that."

Then Elke threw herself on her husband's breast and cried to her heart's content and was no longer alone with her grief. Then suddenly she smiled at him; after pressing his hand passionately, she ran out and got her child from old Trin Jans' room, took it on her lap and caressed and kissed it, until it stammered:

"Mother, my dear mother!"

Thus the people on the dikemaster's farm lived quietly; if the child had not been there, it would have been greatly missed.

Gradually the summer passed by; the migrating birds had flown away, the song of larks was no longer in the air; only in front of the barns, where they pecked at the grain in thrashing time, one could hear some of them scream as they flew away. Already everything was frozen hard. In the kitchen of the main house Trin Jans sat one afternoon on the wooden steps of a stairway that started beside the stove and led to the attic. In the last weeks it seemed as if a new life had entered into her. Now she liked to go into the kitchen occasionally and watch Elke at work; there was no

longer any idea of her legs not being able to carry her so far, since one day little Wienke had pulled her up here by her apron. Now the child was kneeling beside her, looking with her quiet eyes into the flames that were blazing up out of the stove-hole; one of her little hands was clinging to the old woman's sleeve, the other was in her own pale blonde hair. Trin Jans was telling a story: "You know," she said, "I was in the service at your great-grandfather's, as housemaid, and there I had to feed the pigs. He was cleverer than all the rest—then it happened—it was awfully long ago—but, one night, by moonlight, they had the lock to the sea closed, and she couldn't go back into the sea. Oh, how she screamed and clutched her hard, bristly hair with her fish-hands! Yes, child, I saw her and heard her scream. The ditches between the fens were all full of water, and the moon beamed on them so that they shone like silver; and she swam from one ditch into another and raised her arms and clapped what hands she had together, so that one could hear the splash from far, as if she wanted to pray. But, child, those creatures can't pray. I sat in front of the house door on a few beams that had been driven there to build with, and looked far over the fens; and the mermaid was still swimming in the ditches, and when she raised her arms, they were glittering with silver and diamonds. At last I saw her no longer, and the wild geese and gulls that I had not been hearing all the time were again flying through the air with whistling and cackling."

The old woman stopped. The child had caught one word: "Couldn't pray?" she asked. "What are you saying? Who was that?"

"Child," said the old woman; "it was the mermaid; they are monsters and can't be saved."

"Can't be saved!" repeated the child, and a deep sigh made her little breast heave, as if she had understood that.

"Trin Jans!" a deep voice sounded from the kitchen door, and the old woman was a little startled. It was the dike-master Hauke Haien, who leaned there by the post; "what are you telling the child? Haven't I told you to keep your fairy-tales for yourself or else to tell them to the geese and hens?"

The old woman looked at him with an angry glance and pushed the little girl away. "That's no fairy-tale," she murmured, "my great-uncle told it to me!"

"Your great-uncle, Trin? You just said you had seen it yourself."

"That doesn't matter," said the old woman; "but you don't believe me, Hauke Haien; you want to make my great-uncle a liar!" Then she moved nearer to the stove and stretched her hands out over the flames of the stove-hole.

The dikemaster cast a glance at the window: twilight had scarcely begun. "Come, Wienke!" he said and drew his feeble-minded child toward him; "come with me, I want to show you something outside, from the dike. But we have to walk; the white horse is at the blacksmith's." Then he took her into the room and Elke wrapped thick woolen shawls round the child's neck and shoulders; and soon her father walked with her on the old dike toward the northwest, past Jeverssand, where the flats stretched out broad and almost endless.

Now he would carry her, now she would walk holding his hand; the twilight thickened; in the distance everything vanished in mist and vapour. But in parts still in sight, the invisibly swelling streams that washed the flats had broken the ice and, as Hauke Haien had once seen it in his youth, steaming mists rose out of the cracks as at that time, and there again the uncanny foolish figures were hopping toward one another, bowed and suddenly stretched out into horrible breadths.

The child clung frightened to her father and covered her face with his hand. "The sea devils!" she whispered, trembling, through his fingers; "the sea devils!"

He shook his head: "No, Wienke, they are neither mermaids nor sea devils; there are no such things; who told you about them?"

She looked up to him with a dull glance; but she did not reply. Tenderly he stroked her cheeks: "Look there again!" he said, "they are only poor hungry birds! Look now, how that big one spreads its wings; they are getting the fish that go into those steaming cracks!"

"Fish!" repeated Wienke.

"Yes, child, they are all alive, just as we are; there is nothing else; but God is everywhere!"

Little Wienke had fixed her eyes on the ground and held her breath; she looked frightened as if she were gazing into an abyss. Perhaps it only seemed so; her father looked at her a long while, he bent down and looked at her little face, but on it was written no emotion of her inscrutable soul. He lifted her on his arm and put her icy little hands into one of his thick woollen mittens. "There, my Wienke"—the child could not have been aware of the note of passionate tenderness in his words—"there, warm yourself, near me! You are our child, our only one. You love us—" The man's voice broke; but the little girl pressed her small head tenderly against his rough beard.

And so they went home in peace.

After New Year care had once more entered the house. A fever of the marshes had seized the dikemaster; he too had hovered near the edge of the grave, and when he had revived under Elke's nursing and care, he scarcely seemed the same man. The fatigue of his body also lay upon his spirit, and Elke noticed with some worry that he was always easily satisfied. Nevertheless, toward the end of March, he had a desire to mount his white horse and for the first time to ride along his dike again. This was one afternoon when the sun that had shone before, was shrouded for a long while by dim mist.

In the winter there had been a few floods; but they had not been serious. Only over by the other shore a flock of sheep had been drowned on an island and a piece of the foreland torn away; here on this side and on the new land no damage worth mentioning had been done. But in the last night a stronger storm had raged; now the dikemaster had to go out and inspect everything with his own eyes. He had ridden along on the new dike from the southeastern corner and everything was well preserved. But when he reached the northeastern corner, at the point where the new dike meets the old one, the new one, to be sure, was unharmed. But where formerly the channel had reached the old dike and flowed along it, he saw a great, broad piece of the grassy scar destroyed and washed away and a hollow in the

body of the dike worn by the flood, in which, moreover, a network of paths made by mice was exposed. Hauke dismounted and inspected the damage close by: there was no doubt that the mischief done by the mice extended on invisible.

He was startled violently. All this should have been considered when the new dike was being built; as it had been overlooked then, something had to be done now. The cattle were not yet grazing in the fens, the growth of the grass was unusually backward; wherever he looked there was barrenness and void. He mounted his horse again and rode up and down the shore; it was low tide, and he was well aware of how the current had again dug itself a new bed in the clay and had now hit upon the old dike. The new dike, however, when it was hit, had been able to withstand the attack on account of its gentler slope.

A heap of new toil and care rose before the mind's eye of the dikemaster. Not only did the old dike have to be reenforced, its profile, too, had to be made more like that of the new one; above all, the channel, which again had proved dangerous, had to be turned aside by new dams or walls.

Once more he rode on the new dike up to the farthest northwestern corner, then back again, keeping his eyes continually on the newly worn bed of the channel which was marked off clearly on the exposed clay beside him. The white horse pushed forward, snorted and pawed with its front hoofs; but the rider held him back, for he wanted to ride slowly, and to curb the inner unrest that was seething within him more and more wildly.

If a storm flood should come again—a flood like the one in 1655, when property and unnumbered human beings were swallowed up—if it should come again, as it had come several times before! A violent shudder came over the rider—the old dike would not hold out against the sudden attack. What then—what would happen then? There would be only one, one single way of possibly saving the old enclosed land with the property and life in it. Hauke felt his heart stand still, his usually so steady head grew dizzy. He did not utter it, but something spoke within him strongly

enough: your land, the Hauke-Haien-land, would have to be sacrificed and the new dike pierced.

In his mind's eye he saw the rushing tide break in and cover grass and clover with its salty, foaming spray. His spur pricked the flanks of his white horse, which, with a sudden scream, flew along the dike and down the road that led to the hill of the dikemaster.

He came home with his head full of inner fright and disorderly plans. He threw himself into his armchair, and when Elke came into the room with their daughter, he rose again, lifted up the child and kissed it. Then he chased away the little yellow dog with a few light slaps. "I have to go up to the inn again," he said, and took his cap from the hook by the door, where he had only just put it.

His wife looked at him anxiously. "What do you want to do there? It is near evening, Hauke."

"Dike matters!" he muttered. "I'll meet some of the overseers there."

She followed him and pressed his hand, for with these words he had already left the door. Hauke Haien, who hitherto had made all decisions by himself, now was eager for a word from those whom he had not considered worthy of taking an interest before. In the room of the tavern he found Ole Peters with two of the overseers and an inhabitant of the district at the card table.

"I suppose you come from out there, dikemaster?" said Ole, who took up the already half distributed cards and threw them down again.

"Yes, Ole," Hauke replied; "I was there; it looks bad."

"Bad? Well, it'll cost a few hundred pieces of sod and a straw covering. I was there too this afternoon.

"It won't be done so cheaply, Ole," replied the dikemaster; "the channel is there again, and even if it doesn't hit the old dike from the north, it hits it from the northwest."

"You should have left it where you found it," said Ole drily.

"That means," returned Hauke, "the new land's none of your business; and therefore it should not exist. That is your own fault. But if we have to make walls to protect

the old dike, the green clover behind the new one will bring us a profit above the cost."

"What are you saying, dikemaster?" cried the overseers; "Walls? How many? You like to have the most expensive of everything."

The cards lay untouched upon the table. "I'll tell you, dikemaster," said Ole Peters, and leaned on both elbows, "your new land that you presented to us is a devouring thing. Everybody is still laboring under the heavy cost of your broad dike; and now that is devouring our old dike too we are expected to renew it. Fortunately it isn't so bad; the dike has held out so far and will continue to hold out. Mount your white horse to-morrow and look at it again!"

Hauke had come here from the peace of his own house; behind these words he had just heard, moderate though they were, there lay—and he could not but be aware of it—tough resistance; he felt, too, as if he were lacking his old strength to cope with it. "I will do as you advise, Ole," he said; "only I fear I shall find it as I have seen it to-day."

A restless night followed this day. Hauke tossed sleepless upon his pillows. "What is the matter?" asked Elke who was kept awake by worry over her husband; "if something depresses you, speak it out; that's the way we've always done."

"It's of no consequence, Elke," he replied, "there is something to repair on the dike at the locks; you know that I always have to work over these things at night." That was all he said; he wanted to keep freedom of action; unconsciously the clear insight and strong intelligence of his wife was a hindrance to him which he instinctively avoided in his present weakness.

The following morning when he came out on to the dike once more the world was different from the one he had seen the day before; it was low tide again, to be sure, but the day had not yet attained its noon, and beams of the bright spring sun fell almost perpendicularly onto the endless flats. The white gulls flew quietly hither and thither, and invisible above them, high under the azure sky, larks sang their eternal melody. Hauke, who did not know how

nature can deceive one with her charms, stood on the northwestern corner of the dike and looked for the new bed of the channel that had startled him so yesterday, but in the sunlight pouring down from the zenith, he did not even find it at first. Not until he had shaded his eyes from the blinding rays, did he recognise it. Yet the shadows in the twilight of yesterday must have deceived him: it could be discerned but faintly. The exposed mouse business must have done more damage to the dike than the flood. To be sure, things had to be changed; however, this could be done by careful digging and, as Ole Peters had said, the damage could be repaired by fresh sod and some bundles of straw for covering.

"It wasn't so bad," he said to himself, relieved; "you fooled yourself yesterday." He called the overseers, and the work was decided on without contradiction, something that had never happened before.

The dikemaster felt as if a strengthening calm were spreading through his still weakened body and after a few weeks everything was neatly carried out.

The year went on, but the more it advanced and the more undisturbed the newly spread turf grew green through the straw covering, the more restlessly Hauke walked or rode past the spot. He turned his eyes away, he rode on the inside edge of the dike. A few times, when it occurred to him that he would have to pass by the place, he had his horse, though it was already saddled, led back into the stable. Then again, when he had no business there, he would wander to it, suddenly and on foot, so as to leave his hill quickly and unseen. Sometimes he had turned back again, unable once more to inflict on himself the sight of this uncanny place. Finally, he felt like breaking up the whole thing with his own hands, for this piece of the dike lay before his eyes like a bite of conscience that had taken on form outside of himself. And yet his hand could not touch it any more; and to no one, not even his wife, could he talk about it. Thus September had come; at night a moderate storm had raged and at last had blown away to the northwest. On the dull forenoon after it, at low tide, Hauke rode out on the dike and, as his glance swept over

the flats, something shot through him: there, on from the northwest, he suddenly saw the ghostly new bed of the channel again, more sharply marked and worn deeper. No matter how hard he strained his eyes, it would not go.

When he came home, Elke seized his hand. "What's the matter, Hauke?" she said, as she looked at his gloomy face. "There is no new calamity, is there? We are so happy now; it seems, you are at peace now with all of them."

After these words, he did not feel equal to expressing his confused fear.

"No, Elke," he said, "nobody is hostile to me; but it is a responsible function—to protect the community from our Lord's sea."

He withdrew, so as to escape further questioning by his beloved wife. He walked through stable and barn, as if he had to look over everything; but he saw nothing round about. He was preoccupied only with hushing up his conscience, with convincing himself that it was a morbidly exaggerated fear.

The year that I am telling about, my host, the schoolmaster, said after a while, was the year 1756, which will surely never be forgotten in this region. Into the house of Hauke Haien it brought a death. At the end of September Trin Jans, almost ninety years old, was dying in the barn furnished for her. According to her wishes, they had propped her up in her pillows, and her eyes wandered through the little windows with their leaden casements far out into the distance. A thin layer of atmosphere must have lain above a thicker one up in the sky, for there was a high mirage and the reflection raised the sea like a glittering strip of silver above the edge of the dike, so that it shone dazzlingly into the room. The southern tip of Jeverssand was visible, too.

At the foot of the bed little Wienke was cowering, holding with one hand that of her father who stood beside her. On the face of the dying woman death was just imprinting the Hippocratic face, and the child stared breathlessly on the uncanny incomprehensible change in the plain, but familiar features.

"What is she doing? What is that, father?" she whispered, full of fear, and dug her finger nails into her father's hand.

"She is dying!" said the dikemaster.

"Dying!" repeated the child, and seemed to have fallen into a confused pondering.

But the old woman moved her lips once more: "Jens! Jens!" her screams broke out, like cries in danger, and her long arms were stretched out against the glittering reflection of the sea; "Help me! Help me! You are in the water—— God have mercy on the others!"

Her arms sank down, a low creaking of the bedstead could be heard; she had ceased to live.

The child drew a deep breath and lifted her pale eyes to her father's. "Is she still dying?" she asked.

"She has done it!" said the dikemaster, and took his child in his arms. "Now she is far from us with God."

"With God!" repeated the child and was silent for a while, as if she had to think about these words. "Is that good—with God?"

"Yes, that is the best." In Hauke's heart, however, the last words of the dying woman resounded heavily. "God have mercy on the others!" a low voice said within him. "What did the old hag mean? Are the dying prophets—?"

Soon after Trin Jans had been buried by the church, there was more and more talk about all kinds of mischief and strange vermin that had frightened the people in North Frisia, and there was no doubt that on mid-Lent Sunday the golden cock was thrown down by a whirlwind. It was true, too, that in midsummer a great cloud of vermin fell down, like snow, from the sky, so that one could scarcely open one's eyes, and afterwards it lay on the fens in a layer as high as a hand, and no one had ever seen anything like it. But at the end of September, after the hired man had driven to the city market with grain and the maid Ann Grethe with butter, they both climbed down, when they came home, with faces pale from fright. "What's the matter? What's the matter with you?" cried the other maids, who had come running out when they heard the wagon roll up.

Ann Grethe in her travelling clothes stepped breathless into the spacious kitchen. "Well, tell us," cried the maids again, "what has happened?"

"Oh, our Lord Jesus protect us!" cried Ann Grethe. "You know, old Marike of the brickworks from over there across the water—we always stand together with our butter by the drugstore at the corner—she told me, and Iven Johns said too—'There's going to be a calamity!' he said; 'a calamity for all North Frisia; believe me, Ann Grethe!' And"—she muffled her voice—"maybe there's something wrong after all about the dikemaster's white horse!"

"Sh! Sh!" replied the other maids.

"Oh, yes, what do I care! But over there, on the other side, it's even worse than ours. Not only flies and vermin, but blood has poured down from the sky like rain. And the Sunday morning after that, when the pastor went to his washbowl, he found five death's heads in it, as big as peas, and everybody came to look at them. In the month of August horrible red-headed caterpillars crawled all over the land and devoured what they found, grain and flour and bread, and no fire could kill them off."

The talker broke off suddenly; none of the maids had noticed that the mistress of the house had stepped into the kitchen. "What are you talking about there?" she said. "Don't let your master hear that!" And as they all wanted to tell about it now, she stopped them. "Never mind; I heard enough; go to your work; that will bring you better blessings." Then she took Ann Grethe with her into the room and settled the accounts of the market business.

Thus the superstitious talk in the house of the dikemaster found no reception from its master and mistress. But it spread into the other houses, and the longer the evenings grew, the more easily it found its way in. Something like sultry air weighed on all, and it was secretly said that a calamity, a serious one, would come over North Frisia.

It was All Saints' Day, in October. During the day a southwest wind had raged; at night a half moon was in the sky, dark brown clouds chased by it, and shadows and dim light flitted over the earth in confusion. The storm was

growing. In the room of the dikemaster's house stood the cleared supper table, the hired men were sent to the stables to look after the cattle; the maids had to see if the doors and shutters were closed everywhere in the house and attic, so that the storm would not blow in and do harm. Inside stood Hauke beside his wife at the window, after he had hurriedly eaten his supper. He had been outside on the dike. On foot he had marched out, early in the afternoon. Pointed posts and bags full of clay or earth he had had brought to the place where the dike seemed to betray a weakness. Everywhere he had engaged people to ram in the posts and make a dam of them and the bags, as soon as the flood began to damage the dike; at the northwestern corner, where the old and the new dike met, he had placed the most people, who were allowed to leave their appointed posts only in case of need. These orders he had left when scarcely a quarter of an hour ago, he had come home wet and dishevelled, and now, as he listened to the gusts of wind that made the windows rattle in their leaden casements, he gazed absently out into the wild night. The clock on the wall was just striking eight. The child that stood beside her mother, started and buried her head in her mother's clothes. "Claus!" she exclaimed crying, "where's my Claus?"

She had a right to ask, for this year, as well as the year before, the gull had not gone on its winter journey. Her father overheard the question; her mother took the child on her arm. "Your Claus is in the barn," she said; "there he is warm."

"Why?" said Wienke, "is that good?"

"Yes, that is good."

The master of the house was still standing by the window.

"This won't do any longer, Elke!" he said; "call one of the maids; the storm will break through the window-panes—the shutters have to be fastened!"

At the word of the mistress, the maid had rushed out; from the room one could see how her skirts were flying. But when she had loosened the hooks, the storm tore the shutter out of her hand and threw it against the window, so that several panes flew splintered into the room and

one of the candles went out, smoking. Hauke had to go out himself to help, and only with trouble did they gradually get the shutters fastened in front of the windows. As they opened the door to step back into the house a gust blew after them so that the glass and silver in the sideboard rattled; and upstairs, over their heads the beams trembled and creaked, as if the storm wanted to tear the roof from the walls. But Hauke did not come back into the room; Elke heard him walk across the threshing floor to the stable. "The white horse! The white horse, John! Quick!" she heard him call. Then he came back into the room with his hair dishevelled, but his gray eyes beaming. "The wind has turned!" he cried, "to the northwest; at half spring tide! Not a wind—we have never lived through a storm like this!"

Elke had turned deadly pale. "And you want to go out once more?"

He seized both her hands and pressed them almost convulsively. "I have to, Elke."

Slowly she raised her dark eyes to his, and for a few seconds they looked at each other; but it seemed an eternity. "Yes, Hauke," said his wife, "I know—you have to!"

Then trotting was heard outside the house door. She fell upon his neck, and for a moment it seemed as if she could not let him go; but that, too, was only for a moment. "This is our fight!" said Hauke, "you are safe here; no flood has ever risen up to this house. And pray to God that He may be with me too!"

Hauke wrapped himself up in his coat, and Elke took a scarf and wrapped it carefully round his neck, but her trembling lips failed her.

Outside the neighing of the white horse sounded like trumpets amid the howling of the storm. Elke had stepped out with her husband; the old ash tree creaked, as if it would fall to pieces. "Mount, sir!" cried the hired man; "the horse is like mad; the reins might tear!"

Hauke embraced his wife. "At sunrise I'll be back."

He had already leaped onto his horse; the animal rose on its hind legs, then, like a warhorse rushing into battle,

it tore down the hill with its rider, out into the night and the howling storm. "Father, my father!" a plaintive child voice screamed after him, "my dear father!"

Wienke had run after her father as he was tearing away; but after a hundred steps she stumbled over a mound of earth and fell to the ground.

The man Iven Johns brought the crying child back to her mother. She was leaning against the trunk of the ash tree the branches of which were whipping the air above her, and staring absently out into the night where her husband had vanished. When the roaring of the storm and the distant splashing of the sea stopped for a few moments, she started as if in fright; it seemed to her now as if all were seeking to destroy him and would be hushed suddenly when they had seized him. Her knees were trembling, the wind had unloosed and was sporting with her hair. "Here is the child, lady," John cried to her; "hold her fast!" and pressed the little girl into her mother's arms.

"The child?—I had forgotten you, Wienke!" she cried. "God forgive me!" Then she lifted her to her heart, as close as only love can hold, and with her fell on her knees. "Lord God and Thou my Jesus, let us not be widow and orphan! Protect him, oh, good God; only Thou and I, we alone know him!" Now the storm had no more pauses; it howled and thundered as if the whole world would pass away in this uproar.

"Go into the house, lady!" said John; "come!" and he helped them up and led both into the house and into the room.

The dikemaster Hauke Haien sped on his white horse to the dike. The small path seemed to have no bottom, for measureless rain had fallen; nevertheless, the wet, sucking clay did not appear to hold back the hoofs of the animal, for it acted as if it felt the solid ground of summer beneath it. As in a wild chase the clouds wandered in the sky; below lay the marshes like an indistinct desert filled with restless shadows. A muffled roaring rose from the water behind the dike, more and more horrible, as if it had to drown all other sounds. "Get up, horse!" called Hauke, "we are riding our worst ride."

Then a scream of death sounded under the hoofs of his horse. He jerked back the reins, and turned round: beside him, close above the ground, half flying, half hurled by the wind, a swarm of white gulls was passing by with derisive cackling; they were seeking shelter on land. One of them —the moon was shining through the clouds for a moment— lay trampled by the way: the rider believed that he saw a red ribbon flutter at its throat. "Claus!" he cried; "poor Claus!"

Was it the bird of his child? Had it recognised horse and rider and wanted to find shelter with them? The rider did not know. "Get up!" he cried again; the white horse raised his hoofs to gallop once more. All at once the wind stopped, and in its place there was a deathlike silence—but only for a second, when it began again with renewed rage. But human voices and the forlorn barking of dogs meanwhile fell upon the rider's ear, and when he turned his head round to look at his village, he recognised by the appearing moonlight people working round heaped up wagons on the hills and in front of the houses. Instantly he saw other wagons hurriedly driving up to the higher land; he heard the lowing of cattle that were being driven up there out of their warm stables. "Thank God! They are saving themselves and their cattle!" his heart cried within him; and then with a scream of fear: "My wife! My child! No, no; the water doesn't rise up on our hill!"

A terrible gust came roaring from the sea, and horse and rider were rushing against it up the small path to the dike. When they were on top, Hauke stopped his horse violently. But where was the sea? Where Jeverssand? Where had the other shore gone? He saw only mountains of water before him that rose threateningly against the dark sky, that were trying to tower above one another in the dreadful dusk and beat over one another against the solid land. With white crests they rushed on, howling, as if they uttered the outcry of all terrible beasts of prey in the wilderness. The horse kicked and snorted out into the uproar; a feeling came over the rider that here all human power was at an end; that now death, night, and chaos must break in.

But he stopped to think: this really was the storm flood; only he himself had never seen it like this. His wife, his child, were safe on the high hill, in the solid house. His dike—and something like pride shot through his breast—the Hauke-Haien dike, as the people called it, now should show how dikes ought to be built!

But—what was that? He stopped at the corner between the two dikes; where were the men whom he had placed there to keep watch? He glanced to the north up at the old dike; for he had ordered some there too. But neither here nor there could he see a man. He rode a way further out, but he was still alone; only the blowing of the wind and the roar of the sea all the way from an immeasurable distance beat with deafening force against his ear. He turned his horse back again; he reached the deserted corner and let his eyes wander along the line of the new dike. He discerned clearly that the waves were here rolling on more slowly, less violently; there it seemed almost as if there were a different sea. "That will stand all right!" he murmured, and something like a laugh rose within him.

But his laughter vanished when his eyes wandered farther along the line of his dike: in the northwestern corner—what was that? A dark mass was swarming in confusion; he saw that it was stirring busily and crowding—no doubt, there were people! What were they doing, what were they working for now at his dike? Instantly his spurs dug into the shanks of his horse, and the animal sped thither. The storm rushed on broadside; at times the gusts of wind were so violent, that they would almost have been hurled from the dike into the new land—but horse and rider knew where they were riding. Already Hauke saw that a few dozen men were gathered there in eager work, and now he saw clearly that a groove was dug diagonally across the new dike. Forcibly he stopped his horse: "Stop!" he shouted, "stop! What devil's mischief are you doing there?"

In their fright they had let their spades rest, when they had suddenly spied the dikemaster among them. The wind had carried his words over to them, and he noticed that several were trying to answer him; but he saw only their violent gestures, for they stood to the left of him and their

words were blown away by the wind which here at times was throwing the men reeling against each other, so that they gathered close together. Hauke measured the dug-in groove with his quick glance and the might of the water which in spite of the new profile, splashed almost to the top of the dike and sprayed horse and rider. Only ten minutes more of work—he saw that clearly—and the flood would break through the groove and the Hauke-Haien-land would be drowned by the sea!

The dikemaster beckoned one of the workmen to the other side of his horse. "Now, tell me," he shouted, "what are you doing here? What does that mean?"

And the man shouted back: "We are to dig through the new dike, sir, so that the old dike won't break."

"What are you to do?"

"Dig through the new dike."

"And drown the land? What devil has ordered that?"

"No, sir, no devil, the overseer Ole Peters has been here and ordered it."

Rage surged into the rider's eyes. "Do you know me?" he shouted. "Where I am, Ole Peters can't give any orders! Away with you! Go to your posts, where I put you!"

And when they hesitated, he made his horse gallop in among them. "Away to your own or the devil's grandmother!"

"Sir, take care!" cried one of the crowd and hit his spade against the animal that acted as if it were mad; but a kick of its hoof flung the spade from his hand; another man fell to the ground. Then all at once a scream rose from the rest of the crowd—a scream such as only the fear of death can call forth from the throat of man. For a moment all, even the dikemaster and the horse were benumbed. Only one workman had stretched out his arm like a road sign and pointed to the northwestern corner of both dikes where the new one joined the old. Nothing could be heard but the raging of the storm and the roar of the water. Hauke turned round in his saddle: what was that? His eyes grew big: "Lord God! A break! A break in the old dike!"

"Your fault, dikemaster!" shouted a voice out of the crowd; "your fault! Take it with you before the throne of God."

Hauke's face, red with rage, had turned deathly pale; the moon that shone upon it could not make it any paler; his arms hung down limply; he scarcely knew that he was holding his reins. But that, too, was only for a moment. Instantly he pulled himself erect with a heavy moan; then he turned his horse silently, and the white horse snorted and tore away with him eastward upon the dike. The rider glanced sharply to all sides; in his head these thoughts were raging: what fault had he to bear to God's throne? The digging through of the new dike—perhaps they would have accomplished it, if he had not stopped them; but—there was something else that shot seething into his heart, because he knew it all too well—if only, last summer, Ole Peters's malicious words hadn't kept him back—that was the point. He alone had recognised the weakness of the old dike; he ought to have seen the new repairs through in spite of all. "Lord God, yes, I confess it," he cried out aloud suddenly into the storm: "I have fulfilled my task badly."

To his left, close to the horse's hoofs, the sea was raging; in front of him, now in complete darkness lay the old enclosed land with its hills and homelike houses. The pale light of the sky had gone out altogether; from one point only a glimmer of light broke through the dark. A solace came into the man's heart: the light must have been shining over from his own house. It seemed like a greeting from wife and child. Thank God, they were safe on their high hill! The others surely were up in the village of the higher land, for more lights were glimmering there than he had ever seen before. Yes, even high up in the air, perhaps from the church steeple, light was piercing the darkness. "They must all have left—all!" said Hauke to himself; to be sure, on many a hill the houses will lie in ruins; a bad year will come for the flooded fens; sluices and locks will have to be repaired! We'll have to bear it and I will help even those who did me harm; only, Lord, my God, be merciful to us human beings!"

Then he cast a glance to his side at the new enclosed land; the sea foamed round it, but the land lay as if the peace of night were upon it. An inevitable sense of triumph rose out of the rider's breast. "The Hauke-Haien dike will hold all right, it will hold after a hundred years!"

A thundering roar at his feet waked him out of his dreams; the horse refused to go on. What was that? The horse bounded back, and he felt that a piece of the dike was crashing into the depth right before him. He opened his eyes wide and shook off all his pondering: he was stopping by the old dike; his horse had already planted his forelegs upon it. Instinctively he pulled his horse back. Then the last mantle of clouds uncovered the moon, and the mild light shone on all the horror that was rushing, foaming and hissing into the depth before him, down into the old land.

Hauke stared at it, as if bereft of his senses; this was a deluge to devour beasts and men. Then the light glimmered to his eyes again, the same that he had seen before; it was still burning up on his hill. When he looked down into the land now, encouraged as he was, he perceived that behind the chaotic whirlpool that was pouring down, raging in front of him, only a breadth of about a hundred paces was flooded; beyond he could recognise clearly the path that led through the land. He saw still more: a carriage, no, a two-wheeled cart was driven like mad toward the dike; in it sat a woman—yes, a child too. And now—was that not the barking of a little dog that reached his ears through the storm? Almighty God! It was his wife, his child; already they were coming close, and the foaming mass of water was rushing toward them. A scream, a scream of despair broke forth from the rider's breast: "Elke!" he screamed; "Elke! Back! Back!"

But the storm and sea were not merciful, their raving scattered his words. The wind had caught his cloak and almost torn him down from his horse; and the cart was speeding on without pause towards the rushing flood. Then he saw that his wife was stretching out her arms as if toward him. Had she recognised him? Had her longing, her

deathly fear for him driven her out of her safe house? And now—was she crying a last word to him? These questions shot through his brain; they were never answered, for from her to him, and from him to her, their words were all lost. Only a roar as if the world were coming to an end filled their ears and let no other sound enter.

"My child! Oh, Elke, oh, faithful Elke!" Hauke shouted out into the storm. Then another great piece of the dike fell crashing into the depth, and the sea rushed after it, thundering. Once more he saw the head of the horse below, saw the wheels of the cart emerge out of the wild horror and then, caught in an eddy, sink underneath it and drown. The staring eyes of the rider, who was left all alone on the dike, saw nothing more. "The end!" he said, in a low voice to himself. Then he rode up to the abyss where the water, gurgling gruesomely, was beginning to flood his home village. Still he saw the light glimmer from his house; it was soulless now. He drew himself up erect, and drove the spurs into his horse's shanks; the horse reared and would almost have fallen over, but the man's force held it down. "Go on!" he called once more, as he had called so often when he wanted a brisk ride. "Lord God, take me, save the others!"

One more prick of the spurs; a scream from the horse that rose above the storm and the roar of the waves—then from the rushing stream below a muffled sound, a short struggle.

The moon shone from her height, but down on the dike there was no more life, only the wild waters that soon had almost wholly flooded the old land. But the hill of Hauke Haien's farm was still rising above the turmoil, the light was still glimmering there and from the higher land, where the houses were gradually growing darker, the lonely light in the church steeple sent its quivering gleams over the foaming waves.

The story-teller stopped. I took hold of my full glass that had for a long time been standing before me, but I did not raise it to my lips; my hand remained on the table.

"That is the story of Hauke Haien," my host began again, "as I have been able to tell it according to my best knowledge. To be sure, the housekeeper of our dikemaster would have told it differently. For people tell this too: the white horse skeleton was seen after the flood again, just as before, by moonlight on Jevers Island; the whole village is supposed to have seen it. But this is certain: Hauke Haien with wife and child perished in this flood. Not even their graves have I been able to find up in the churchyard; their dead bodies must have been carried by the receding water through the breach into the sea and gradually have been dissolved into their elements on the sea bottom—thus they were left in peace by men at last. But the Hauke-Haien dike is still standing after a hundred years, and to-morrow, if you are going to ride to the city and don't mind half an hour's longer way, your horse will feel it under its hoofs.

"The thanks of a younger generation that Jewe Manners had once promised the builder of the dike he never received, as you have seen. For that is the way, sir: Socrates they gave poison to drink, and our Lord Christ they nailed to the cross. That can't be done so easily nowadays, but—making a saint out of a tyrant or a bad, stubborn priest, or turning a good fellow, just because he towers above us by a head, into a ghost or a monster—that's still done every day."

When the serious little man had said that, he got up and listened into the night. "Some change must have gone on outside," he said, and drew the woolen covering from the window. There was bright moonlight. "Look," he went on, "there the overseers are coming back; but they are scattering, they are going home. There must have been a break in the dike on the other shore; the water has sunk."

I looked out beside him. The windows up here were above the edge of the dike; everything was just as he had said. I took up my glass and drank the rest: "I thank you for this evening. I think now we can sleep in peace."

"We can," replied the little gentleman; "I wish you heartily a good night's sleep."

As I walked downstairs, I met the dikemaster in the hall; he wanted to take home a map that he had left in the

tavern. "All over!" he said. "But our schoolmaster, I suppose, has told you a fine story—he belongs to the enlighteners!"

"He seems to be a sensible man."

"Yes, yes, surely; but you can't distrust your own eyes. And over there on the other side—I said it would—the dike is broken."

I shrugged my shoulders. "You will have to think that over in bed. Good night, dikemaster."

The next morning, in the golden sunlight that shone over wide ruin, I rode down to the city on the Hauke-Haien dike.

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

A BERLIN NOVEL

BY

THEODOR FONTANE

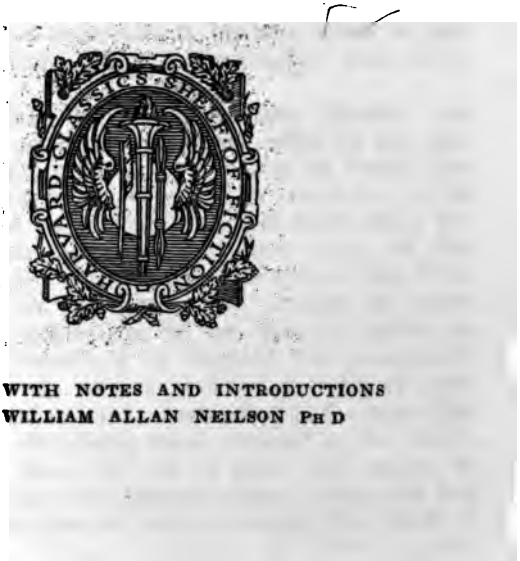
TRANSLATED FROM THE FOURTEENTH EDITION

BY KATHARINE ROYCE

THE HARVARD CLASSICS
SHELF OF FICTION
SELECTED BY CHARLES W ELIOT LL D

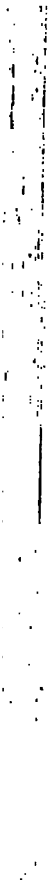
GERMAN FICTION

J W VON GOETHE — GOTTFRIED KELLER
THEODOR FONTANE — THEODOR STORM



EDITED WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTIONS
BY WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON PH D

P F COLLIER & SON COMPANY
NEW YORK



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THEODOR FONTANE, though ranking as one of the greatest of German novelists, was by race entirely of French Huguenot stock. He was born at Neu-Ruppin, near Berlin, on December 30, 1819. His father, the son of a Gascon drawing-master at the court of Prussia, was an apothecary; but his happy-go-lucky disposition and his passion for gambling hindered his success in business. The mother was able and practical, but was unable to keep up the family fortunes, and the marriage was finally dissolved.

After a somewhat irregular education, Theodor was apprenticed to an apothecary in Berlin when he was sixteen, and after four years of preparation he found himself qualified to practice a profession in which he had no interest. Before he was twenty he had published verses and a story, and he spent his leisure in literary clubs. In 1850 he received a position in the press department of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, on the strength of which he married. Two years later he was sent to London to write reports on conditions in England for government journals, and this was only the first of a series of visits to Britain. He acted as war correspondent in the campaigns of 1864, 1866, and 1870, being taken prisoner by the French when visiting the home of Joan of Arc. His interest in the picturesque history of Scotland seems to have led him to the study of the past of his own region, the Mark of Brandenburg, his thorough knowledge of which appears both in his descriptive works and in his fiction. The greater part of his life was spent in Berlin, where he died on September 20, 1898, honored as one of the leading men of letters of his time.

Fontane's earlier literary efforts were mainly in verse, the best of which is ballad poetry, largely of Scottish

inspiration. His middle period was chiefly devoted to descriptions of travel. It was not till he was nearly sixty that he really found himself and turned to the writing of the novels on which his fame chiefly depends. He began in 1878 with "Before the Storm," a long romance after the manner of Sir Walter Scott, and for the next twenty years he drew on his accumulated knowledge of life and produced with great fertility. His most successful field was the Berlin life with which fifty years in the Prussian capital had made him intimately familiar, and his chief works are "L'Adultera" (1882), "Petöfi" (1884), "Cécile" (1887), "Stine" (1890), "Frau Jenny Treibel" (1892), "The Poggenpuhls" (1896), and, in the year of his death, "Stechlin."

The interest of these novels lies rather in character than in action. While he portrays many types characteristic of Berlin and the surrounding region, and is very successful in rendering local color and the atmosphere of the particular circle described in each book, his penetration into universal human nature is sufficiently deep to raise him far above provincialism. His effort is to represent people vividly and naturally in their normal relations, not to strain after sensational or even dramatic situations, though two of his shorter tales, "Grete Minde" and "Ellernklipp," dealing as they do with crimes, are to some extent exceptions to this rule. "Trials and Tribulations" ("Irrungen Wirrungen", 1887) gives an excellent idea of his power. In a gently moving story, told without the forcing of emotion or the contriving of exciting scenes, he deals with the pathos of the relation between a man and a woman, alike in an attractive simplicity of character, but forced apart by difference of rank. The situation is laid before us without expressed censure or protest, and is allowed to have its effect by the sober truth of its presentation. Fontane's is an honest and sincere art, none the less great because unpretentious.

W. A. N.

RITICISMS AND INTERPRETATIONS

I

By Richard M. Meyer

ONTANE possesses the wonderful irony of the Berliner —an irony which, paradoxical as it may sound, is naïve; for it is nothing but an involuntary doubt of equally naïve conceit, as Fontane often likes to say. uredly the Berliner is inclined to a certain conceitedness. belongs to a city which has grown great in a struggle inst antipathies—antipathies of the Government and of "Junker" class, of the poets and of the rival capitals, might almost say of nature herself, so sparingly has dealt with this city on the Spree. In this constant ggle Berlin has been victorious, and every Berliner to day feels that victory to the marrow of his bones. Fone, using his friend Lepel as his mouthpiece, makes him , "Well, Fontane, there you are again; talking like an cle. It all comes from that curiously naïve belief in rself. You always think you know everything best. I can tell you, there are people living on the other of the mountains too." This quiet feeling of superiority Berliner has gained only after a struggle, and therefore is at bottom precisely aware of his limits. No one express this more strikingly than Fontane himself: eply penetrated by my insufficiency and my ignorance, aw—incredible though it may seem—that the ignorance my fellow-creatures was even greater than my own. So vas at the same moment both humble and conceited." ere is the typical Berliner! He knows well his own kness, but, since he is successful, he takes it for nted in all naïveté that he is yet the one-eyed among blind.

It is this attitude which gives Fontane's irony its p flavor. . . .

The gentle melancholy of two people coming to in a way which can never lead to full satisfactio quiet tragedy of a separation not forced by external but by the constant pressure of circumstances—this i sounds through this splendid story. "Trials and T tions" is built entirely on this motive. An honest young officer and a decent pretty girl get to knov other on an excursion. Unconsciously they drift into tion where heart meets heart, the breaking of which the deepest pain. But both see clearly from the beg that there is no other end. For they know that the is stronger than the individual, and the many small m than the one supreme. They know it, for they are, lik creator, resigned realists. They shut their eyes only ir not to see the end too near. Then comes the partin and quiet: "She leaned on him and said quietly and w 'And so this is the last time that I shall hold you in mine?' "—From "Die deutsche Litteratur des neunz Jahrhunderts" (1910).

II

By S. C. de Soissons

IN 1898, Germany suffered a great loss in the per Theodor Fontane, who represented a superio of realism, and to whom the modern German was very much indebted. As he was of French orig writings naturally possessed more equilibrium and n than one usually finds in German writers; he also had and keen *esprit*, never importuning, never displayi wit, never running into pathos. For that reason his seemed cold to sentimental readers and frivolous to mo But the cultivated and unprejudiced reader admired hi experience and his deep knowledge of external life as of the depths of the human soul, qualities whic mingled with a love of his native country, Brand

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A BERLIN NOVEL

CHAPTER I

AT the junction of the Kurfürstendamm and the Kurfürstenstrasse, diagonally across from the Zoological Garden, there still remained, about the middle of the seventies, a large market-garden, extending towards the open country. The little house belonging to this property had but three windows, and was set about a hundred paces back in a front garden; yet in spite of its small size and its secluded position, it could be plainly seen from the road that ran past. But all else that belonged to the place, and indeed formed the principal part of it, was hidden behind this little dwelling as if by the side-scenes of a theatre, and only a little red and green painted tower with a half broken dial beneath its peak (nothing remained of the clock itself) gave one a hint, that behind this "coulisse" something more must be hidden, a hint which was confirmed from time to time by the rising and circling of a flock of pigeons around the tower, and still more by the occasional barking of a dog. Where this dog was actually kept it was indeed impossible to find out, in spite of the fact that the door of the house, which was close to the left corner, stood open early and late and afforded a glimpse of a small part of the yard. However, nothing seemed to have been purposely hidden, and yet everyone who came along the road at the time when our story begins, had to be satisfied with a glimpse of the little house with its three windows and of a few fruit trees that stood in the front garden.

It was the week after Whitsunday, when the days are so long that it seems as if the dazzling light would never come to an end. But to-day the sun was already hidden behind

the church-tower of Wilmersdorf and instead of the light, with which it had filled the front garden all day, the shades of evening had already fallen, and the half mysterious silence was only surpassed by that of the little house which was occupied by old Frau Nimptsch and her adopted daughter Lena as tenants. But Frau Nimptsch was sitting as usual by the large low hearth in her front room, which took in the whole width of the house, and, bending forward, she was gazing at a blackened old tea kettle, whose lid kept up a continual rattling, although the steam was pouring out of the spout. The old woman was holding her hands out towards the glowing embers and was so lost in her thoughts and dreams that she did not hear the hall door open and a stout woman enter somewhat noisily. Only when the latter cleared her throat and greeted her friend and neighbor, our Frau Nimptsch, quite affectionately by name, did the latter turn around and speak to her guest in friendly fashion and with a touch of playfulness: "Well, this is good in you, dear Frau Dörr, to come over again. And from the "castle" too. For it is a castle and always will be. It has a tower. And now do sit down. . . . I just saw your dear husband go out. Of course he would have to. For this is his evening at the bowling alley."

She who received this friendly greeting as Frau Dörr was not only stout, but was an especially imposing-looking woman, who produced the impression of narrow-mindedness as well as that of kindliness and trustworthiness. Meanwhile Frau Nimptsch apparently took no offence and only repeated: "Yes, his evening at the bowling alley. But what I was going to say was, that Dörr's hat really will not do any longer. It is all threadbare and really disgraceful. You ought to take it away from him and put another in its place. Perhaps he would never know the difference. . . . And now draw up your chair, dear Frau Dörr, or perhaps over there where the footstool is. . . . Lena, you know, has slipped out and left me in the lurch again."

"Has he been here?"

"Of course he has. And they have both gone a little way towards Wilmersdorf; nobody comes along the footpath. But they may be back again any minute."

"Well, then I had better go."

"Oh, no indeed, dear Frau Dörr. He will not stay. And even if he should, you know, he would not mind."

"I know, I know. And how are things then?"

"Why, how should they be? I believe she is thinking of something even if she does not want others to know it, and she is imagining something or other."

"Oh, my goodness," said Frau Dörr, as she drew up a somewhat higher stool instead of the footstool that had been offered her. "Oh, my goodness, then it's bad. Whenever one begins to imagine things, trouble begins. It is just like the Amen in church. See here, dear Frau Nimptsch, it was just the very same with me, only there was no imagining. And that is just why everything was really quite different."

Apparently Frau Nimptsch did not really understand what Frau Dörr meant, and so the latter went on: "And because I never took any notions into my head, things always went perfectly well and smoothly and now I have Dörr. Oh well, that isn't much, but still it is something respectable and I can show my face everywhere. And that is why I went to church with him too, and not merely to the registrar's office. If you only go to the registrar's office, there will always be talk."

Frau Nimptsch nodded.

But Frau Dörr repeated: "Yes, in church, in the Matthäikirche. But this is what I was really going to say, don't you see, my dear Frau Nimptsch, I was really taller and more pleasing than Lena, and if I was not prettier (for that is something one can never rightly know and tastes differ so), yet my figure was stouter and a great many like that. Yes, so much is certain. But even if I was, as you might say, more solid and weighed more, and there was a something about me—well yes, there was something about me—yet I was always very innocent, almost simple; and as to him, my Count, with his fifty years on his shoulders, well, he was very simple too and always very gay and would never behave properly. And before very long, I told him: "No, no, Count, this will never do; I can't allow anything like this. . . ." And old people are always like

that. I will only say, dear Frau Nimptsch, you can't imagine anything of the sort. It was dreadful. And now when I see Lena's Baron, it makes me ashamed to think what mine was like. And now as to Lena herself. My Lord, of course she isn't exactly an angel, but she is neat and industrious and knows how to do everything, and loves order and practical things. And don't you see, Frau Nimptsch, that is just the sad part of it. These fly-abouts, that are here to-day and there to-morrow, well, they never come to grief, they always fall on their feet like a cat, but such a good child, who takes everything seriously, and does everything for the sake of love, that is bad. . . . Or perhaps it may not be so bad; you only adopted her and she is not your own flesh and blood and perhaps she is a princess or something like that."

At this conjecture Frau Nimptsch shook her head and looked as if she were about to answer. But Frau Dörr had already risen and said, as she looked along the garden path: "Heavens, there they come. And he is just in civilian's clothes, with coat and trousers to match. But you would notice him all the same! And now he is whispering something in her ear and she is smiling to herself. But she is blushing so. . . . And now he is going away. And now . . . Really, I believe, he is turning back. No, no, he is only saying good-bye again and she is throwing him a kiss. . . . Yes, I think something like that would have suited me. . . . No, mine was not like that."

Frau Dörr went on talking, until Lena came in and greeted both women.

CHAPTER II

THE next forenoon the sun, which was already rather high, shone into the yard of the Dörr's little establishment and lighted up a considerable number of buildings, among which was the "castle" of which Frau Nimptsch had spoken on the previous evening with roguish playfulness. Such a "castle"! In the twilight its general outlines might have passed for something of the sort, but to-day, as it stood in the remorselessly bright light, one could see only too plainly, that the building with its Gothic windows painted on the walls clear to the top, was nothing more than a wretched old wooden house, in the two gable ends of which had been set some timber framing, the spaces of which were filled with plaster, a comparatively solid structure which indicated two gable rooms. All the rest of the house was merely a stone-paved space from which a confused looking set of ladders led to a loft or garret and from that to the tower which served as a pigeon house. Formerly, before Dörr's time, the whole great wooden "shack" had served merely as a store-house for bean poles and watering pots, perhaps even as a potato cellar, but since, some years ago, the garden had been bought by its present owner, the real dwelling house had been rented to Frau Nimptsch, and the old building painted in the Gothic style, with the addition of the two gable rooms already mentioned, had been arranged as a dwelling for Dörr, who was then a widower; a very primitive arrangement it was, which was in no wise altered by his speedy second marriage. In the summer this cool store house with its stone pavements and almost no windows was not a bad dwelling place, but in the winter Dörr and his wife as well as a rather feeble-minded twenty-year-old son of the former marriage, would have actually frozen, had it not been for the two big hothouses which stood on the other side of the yard. In these the three Dörrs spent their time exclu-

sively from November until March, but even in the warmer and more comfortable part of the year, the family life, when it was not actually necessary to seek refuge from the sun, was mostly carried on in front of these hot houses or in them, because everything there was more convenient. Here were the steps and shelves on which the flowers that were brought out of the hothouses every morning had their airing, here was the stall for the cow and the goat, and here the kennel for the dog that was used to pull the little wagon, and from here extended outward the double row of hotbeds, perhaps fifty paces long, and with a little path between, until they reached the vegetable garden which lay further back. This garden did not look very neat, partly because Dörr had no sense of order, and also because he had such a passion for poultry, that he would allow his favorites to scratch and pick everywhere, without regard to the damage that they did. To be sure, the damage was not great, for there was nothing very fine in the garden except the asparagus beds. Dörr thought that the commonest things were also the most profitable, and therefore raised marjoram and other herbs for seasoning sausages, especially "borré," concerning which he held the opinion that a genuine Berliner really needs only three things: his pale ale, his "gilka" and "borré." "With borré," he always concluded, "one is never at a loss." He was decidedly an eccentric, wholly self-sufficient in his views and was decidedly indifferent as to what might be said about him. His second marriage was in keeping with this tendency, a marriage of inclination, upon which the idea of his wife's unusual beauty had had its effect as well as her former relation to the Count, which instead of injuring her chances, had tipped the balance for the better and had simply served as a complete proof that her charms were irresistible. If there was any hint of overvaluing personal charms—and there was good ground for this opinion—it could not be on the side of Dörr himself, for whom nature, so far as outward appearances were concerned, had done uncommonly little. Thin, of medium height and with five strands of grey hair drawn over his head and brow, his looks would have been completely ordinary had not a brown mole between his eye and

his left temple given him a certain mark of distinction. For this reason his wife, with some reason and in her own free and easy fashion used to say: "He is withered looking, but from the left he reminds me of a "Borsdorfer."

This description was well hit off and would have served to identify him anywhere if he had not continually worn a linen cap with a big visor, which being drawn well down over his face, hid its every-day as well as its unusual aspect.

And so, with his cap and visor drawn down over his face, he stood once more, on the day after the conversation between Frau Dörr and Frau Nimptsch, before a flower stand that stood against the front greenhouse, setting to one side various wallflower and geranium pots, which were to go to the weekly market on the morrow. They were all plants that had not been raised in pots, but simply set into them, and with especial joy and satisfaction he passed them in review, laughing beforehand at the "madams," who would come the next day to spend their usual five pfennigs, but in the end would be fooled. He considered this one of his greatest pleasures and indeed it was the principal part of his mental life. "If I could only hear them scold about it . . . If I only could."

He was talking to himself in this vein, when he heard from the garden the barking of a little cur together with the distressed crowing of a cock, and unless he was very much deceived, of *his* cock, his favorite with the silvery feathers. And looking toward the garden, he actually saw his flock of hens rushing this way and that, while the cock had flown up in a pear tree, from which he constantly called for help while the dog barked beneath.

"Thunder and lightning," cried Dörr in a rage. "There is Bollmann's dog again. . . . He has got through the fence again. . . . But we shall see." . . . And quickly setting down the geranium pot that he was examining, he ran to the dog kennel, caught up the hook of the chain and turned the big dog loose, who rushed furiously through the garden. But before he could reach the pear tree, "Bollmann's beast" had already given leg bail and was disappearing under the fence into the open, the big yellow dog pursuing him with great leaps. But the gap that had sufficed for the pug would

not let him through, and he was forced to give up the chase.

Dörr himself had no better luck, when he came up with a rake and exchanged glances with the dog. "Well, Sultan, we didn't catch him this time." And so Sultan trotted back to his kennel in a slow, puzzled way, as if he had been blamed for something. But Dörr himself gazed after the pug who was running over the ploughed ground and said to himself presently: "The Devil take me, if I don't get me an air gun at Mehle's or somewhere. And then I'll get the beast out of the way so silently that neither cock nor hen will make a sound. Not even mine."

The cock, however, seemed to have for the present no use for the quiet attributed to him by Dörr, but continued to use his voice just as strenuously as before. And meanwhile he puffed out his silver white throat as proudly as if he wanted to show the hens that his flying up into the pear tree was a well-considered "coup" or else a mere whim.

But Dörr said: "Oh Lord, what a cock. He thinks he is something wonderful. And yet his courage doesn't amount to much."

And so saying he went back to his flower stand.

CHAPTER III

THE whole incident had also been observed by Frau Dörr, who was cutting asparagus, but she paid very little attention, because such things happened nearly every other day. So she kept on with her work, and only gave up the search, when even the sharpest scrutiny of the beds failed to reveal any more white heads. Only then did she hang the basket on her arm, putting the knife in it, and driving a couple of strayed chickens before her, while she walked slowly along the middle path of the garden and then into the yard and up to the flower stand, where Dörr had resumed his work for the market.

"Well, Susy," he greeted his better half, "here you are. Did you see? Bollmann's dog was here again. Listen, he had better say his prayers and then I will try him out over the fire; there must be a little fat on him and Sultan can have the scraps. . . . And listen, Susy, dog's fat. . . . And he appeared to become absorbed in a favorite method of treating gout which he had been considering for some time. But at this moment he caught sight of the asparagus basket on his wife's arm, and interrupted himself. "Come, show it to me," he said. "Did you have good luck?"

"So so," said Frau Dörr, holding out the scarcely half-filled basket, whose contents he passed through his fingers, shaking his head. For most of the stalks were thin and there were many broken ones among them.

"Now, Susy, listen. You certainly have no eye for asparagus."

"Yes I have, too. But I can't work magic."

"Oh well, we will not quarrel, Susy; that will not make it any more than it is. But it looks like starvation."

"Why, not at all. They are all under ground, and whether they come up to-day or to-morrow, it is all the same. One good shower, such as we had before Whitsunday, and then you will see. And there is going to be rain. The water

barrel is already smelling again and the big spider has crept into the corner. But you want to have everything every day; and you can't expect that."

Dörr laughed. "Well, tie it all up nicely. And the poor little stalks too. And then you can sell it a little cheaper."

"Now, don't talk like that," interrupted his wife, who always got angry over his avarice, but still she pulled his ear, which he always regarded as a sign of affection, and then she went over to the "castle," where she meant to make herself comfortable in the stone paved passageway and tie up her asparagus in bunches. But she had scarcely drawn up to the threshold the stool which always stood ready, than she heard, over in the little house with three windows where Frau Nimptsch lived, a back window pushed up vigorously and a moment later hooked in place. And then she saw Lena with a lilac and white jacket over her woolen skirt and a cap on her ash-blond hair, waving a friendly greeting to her.

Frau Dörr returned the greeting with equal warmth and said: "The window always open; that's right, Lena. It is already beginning to grow hot. Some change must be coming."

"Yes. And mother already has her headache from the heat, and so I would rather iron in the back room. It is pleasanter here too; at the front we don't see anybody."

"That is so," answered Frau Dörr. "I believe I will come over to the window for a bit. I can always work better when I have some one to talk to."

"How kind and good you are, Frau Dörr. But right here by the window the sun is so strong."

"That will do no harm, Lena. I will bring my market umbrella along, the old thing is covered with patches. But it serves its purpose still."

And within five minutes, good Frau Dörr had moved her stool over by the window and sat there as comfortable and self-satisfied as if she were at the regular market. Inside the room Lena had put the ironing board across two chairs close to the window and stood so near it that it would have been easy to reach her with one's hand. Meanwhile the flatiron moved busily back and forth. And Frau Dörr

also was diligently choosing and binding up her asparagus and if she paused from her work now and then and glanced into the room, she could see the glow of the little ironing stove from which the fresh coals were taken for the flatiron.

"You might just bring me a plate, Lena, a plate or a dish." And when Lena brought what Frau Dörr had asked, the good woman dropped into the dish the broken pieces of asparagus which she had kept in her apron while she was sorting out the stalks. "There, Lena, that will make a little taste of asparagus. And it is just as good as the rest. For it is all nonsense that you must always have the heads. And it is just the same with cauliflower; always the flower . . . pure imagination. The stump is really the best, for the strength of the plant is there. And the strength is always the most important thing."

"Heavens, you are always so good, Frau Dörr. But what will your husband say?"

"He? What he says doesn't matter. He will be talking. He always wants me to put in the spindling ones with the rest as if they were real stalks; but I don't like such cheating tricks, even if the broken pieces do taste just as good as the whole stalks. What anyone pays for, he ought to get, only it makes me angry that a man who gets on so well should be such an old skinflint. But all gardeners are like that, skimp and grasp and then they can never get enough."

"Yes," laughed Lena, "he is greedy and a bit peculiar. But for all that he is a good man."

"Yes, Lena, he is well enough so far, and even his stinginess would not be so bad, for at least it is better than wastefulness, if only he were not too fond. You would not believe it, but he is always right there. And just look at him. I have nothing but bother with him for all that he is fifty-six years old, and maybe a year more. For he tells lies if it suits him to. I keep telling him about strokes of apoplexy and point out people who limp or have their mouths drawn to one side, but he always laughs and will not believe me. But it will happen. Yes, Lena, I have no doubt that it will happen. And perhaps soon. Well, he has willed me everything he has and so I will not say anything more.

that. I will only say, dear Frau Nimptsch, you can't imagine anything of the sort. It was dreadful. And now when I see Lena's Baron, it makes me ashamed to think what mine was like. And now as to Lena herself. My Lord, of course she isn't exactly an angel, but she is neat and industrious and knows how to do everything, and loves order and practical things. And don't you see, Frau Nimptsch, that is just the sad part of it. These fly-abouts, that are here to-day and there to-morrow, well, they never come to grief, they always fall on their feet like a cat, but such a good child, who takes everything seriously, and does everything for the sake of love, that is bad. . . . Or perhaps it may not be so bad; you only adopted her and she is not your own flesh and blood and perhaps she is a princess or something like that."

At this conjecture Frau Nimptsch shook her head and looked as if she were about to answer. But Frau Dörr had already risen and said, as she looked along the garden path: "Heavens, there they come. And he is just in civilian's clothes, with coat and trousers to match. But you would notice him all the same! And now he is whispering something in her ear and she is smiling to herself. But she is blushing so. . . . And now he is going away. And now . . . Really, I believe, he is turning back. No, no, he is only saying good-bye again and she is throwing him a kiss. . . . Yes, I think something like that would have suited me. . . . No, mine was not like that."

Frau Dörr went on talking, until Lena came in and greeted both women.

CHAPTER II

THE next forenoon the sun, which was already rather high, shone into the yard of the Dörr's little establishment and lighted up a considerable number of buildings, among which was the "castle" of which Frau Nimptsch had spoken on the previous evening with roguish playfulness. Such a "castle"! In the twilight its general outlines might have passed for something of the sort, but to-day, as it stood in the remorselessly bright light, one could see only too plainly, that the building with its Gothic windows painted on the walls clear to the top, was nothing more than a wretched old wooden house, in the two gable ends of which had been set some timber framing, the spaces of which were filled with plaster, a comparatively solid structure which indicated two gable rooms. All the rest of the house was merely a stone-paved space from which a confused looking set of ladders led to a loft or garret and from that to the tower which served as a pigeon house. Formerly, before Dörr's time, the whole great wooden "shack" had served merely as a store-house for bean poles and watering pots, perhaps even as a potato cellar, but since, some years ago, the garden had been bought by its present owner, the real dwelling house had been rented to Frau Nimptsch, and the old building painted in the Gothic style, with the addition of the two gable rooms already mentioned, had been arranged as a dwelling for Dörr, who was then a widower; a very primitive arrangement it was, which was in no wise altered by his speedy second marriage. In the summer this cool store-house with its stone pavements and almost no windows was not a bad dwelling place, but in the winter Dörr and his wife as well as a rather feeble-minded twenty-year-old son of the former marriage, would have actually frozen, had it not been for the two big hothouses which stood on the other side of the yard. In these the three Dörrs spent their time exclu-

sively from November until March, but even in the warmer and more comfortable part of the year, the family life, when it was not actually necessary to seek refuge from the sun, was mostly carried on in front of these hot houses or in them, because everything there was more convenient. Here were the steps and shelves on which the flowers that were brought out of the hothouses every morning had their airing, here was the stall for the cow and the goat, and here the kennel for the dog that was used to pull the little wagon, and from here extended outward the double row of hotbeds, perhaps fifty paces long, and with a little path between, until they reached the vegetable garden which lay further back. This garden did not look very neat, partly because Dörr had no sense of order, and also because he had such a passion for poultry, that he would allow his favorites to scratch and pick everywhere, without regard to the damage that they did. To be sure, the damage was not great, for there was nothing very fine in the garden except the asparagus beds. Dörr thought that the commonest things were also the most profitable, and therefore raised marjoram and other herbs for seasoning sausages, especially "borré," concerning which he held the opinion that a genuine Berliner really needs only three things: his pale ale, his "gilka" and "borré." "With borré," he always concluded, "one is never at a loss." He was decidedly an eccentric, wholly self-sufficient in his views and was decidedly indifferent as to what might be said about him. His second marriage was in keeping with this tendency, a marriage of inclination, upon which the idea of his wife's unusual beauty had had its effect as well as her former relation to the Count, which instead of injuring her chances, had tipped the balance for the better and had simply served as a complete proof that her charms were irresistible. If there was any hint of overvaluing personal charms—and there was good ground for this opinion—it could not be on the side of Dörr himself, for whom nature, so far as outward appearances were concerned, had done uncommonly little. Thin, of medium height and with five strands of grey hair drawn over his head and brow, his looks would have been completely ordinary had not a brown mole between his eye and

his left temple given him a certain mark of distinction. For this reason his wife, with some reason and in her own free and easy fashion used to say: "He is withered looking, but from the left he reminds me of a "Borsdorfer."

This description was well hit off and would have served to identify him anywhere if he had not continually worn a linen cap with a big visor, which being drawn well down over his face, hid its every-day as well as its unusual aspect.

And so, with his cap and visor drawn down over his face, he stood once more, on the day after the conversation between Frau Dörr and Frau Nimptsch, before a flower stand that stood against the front greenhouse, setting to one side various wallflower and geranium pots, which were to go to the weekly market on the morrow. They were all plants that had not been raised in pots, but simply set into them, and with especial joy and satisfaction he passed them in review, laughing beforehand at the "madams," who would come the next day to spend their usual five pfennigs, but in the end would be fooled. He considered this one of his greatest pleasures and indeed it was the principal part of his mental life. "If I could only hear them scold about it . . . If I only could."

He was talking to himself in this vein, when he heard from the garden the barking of a little cur together with the distressed crowing of a cock, and unless he was very much deceived, of *his* cock, his favorite with the silvery feathers. And looking toward the garden, he actually saw his flock of hens rushing this way and that, while the cock had flown up in a pear tree, from which he constantly called for help while the dog barked beneath.

"Thunder and lightning," cried Dörr in a rage. "There is Bollmann's dog again. . . . He has got through the fence again. . . . But we shall see." . . . And quickly setting down the geranium pot that he was examining, he ran to the dog kennel, caught up the hook of the chain and turned the big dog loose, who rushed furiously through the garden. But before he could reach the pear tree, "Bollmann's beast" had already given leg bail and was disappearing under the fence into the open, the big yellow dog pursuing him with great leaps. But the gap that had sufficed for the pug would

not let him through, and he was forced to give up the chase.

Dörr himself had no better luck, when he came up with a rake and exchanged glances with the dog. "Well, Sultan, we didn't catch him this time." And so Sultan trotted back to his kennel in a slow, puzzled way, as if he had been blamed for something. But Dörr himself gazed after the pug who was running over the ploughed ground and said to himself presently: "The Devil take me, if I don't get me an air gun at Mehle's or somewhere. And then I'll get the beast out of the way so silently that neither cock nor hen will make a sound. Not even mine."

The cock, however, seemed to have for the present no use for the quiet attributed to him by Dörr, but continued to use his voice just as strenuously as before. And meanwhile he puffed out his silver white throat as proudly as if he wanted to show the hens that his flying up into the pear tree was a well-considered "coup" or else a mere whim.

But Dörr said: "Oh Lord, what a cock. He thinks he is something wonderful. And yet his courage doesn't amount to much."

And so saying he went back to his flower stand.

CHAPTER III

THE whole incident had also been observed by Frau Dörr, who was cutting asparagus, but she paid very little attention, because such things happened nearly every other day. So she kept on with her work, and only gave up the search, when even the sharpest scrutiny of the beds failed to reveal any more white heads. Only then did she hang the basket on her arm, putting the knife in it, and driving a couple of strayed chickens before her, while she walked slowly along the middle path of the garden and then into the yard and up to the flower stand, where Dörr had resumed his work for the market.

"Well, Susy," he greeted his better half, "here you are. Did you see? Bollmann's dog was here again. Listen, he had better say his prayers and then I will try him out over the fire; there must be a little fat on him and Sultan can have the scraps. . . . And listen, Susy, dog's fat. . . . And he appeared to become absorbed in a favorite method of treating gout which he had been considering for some time. But at this moment he caught sight of the asparagus basket on his wife's arm, and interrupted himself. "Come, show it to me," he said. "Did you have good luck?"

"So so," said Frau Dörr, holding out the scarcely half-filled basket, whose contents he passed through his fingers, shaking his head. For most of the stalks were thin and there were many broken ones among them.

"Now, Susy, listen. You certainly have no eye for asparagus."

"Yes I have, too. But I can't work magic."

"Oh well, we will not quarrel, Susy; that will not make it any more than it is. But it looks like starvation."

"Why, not at all. They are all under ground, and whether they come up to-day or to-morrow, it is all the same. One good shower, such as we had before Whitsunday, and then you will see. And there is going to be rain. The water

barrel is already smelling again and the big spider has crept into the corner. But you want to have everything every day; and you can't expect that."

Dörr laughed. "Well, tie it all up nicely. And the poor little stalks too. And then you can sell it a little cheaper."

"Now, don't talk like that," interrupted his wife, who always got angry over his avarice, but still she pulled his ear, which he always regarded as a sign of affection, and then she went over to the "castle," where she meant to make herself comfortable in the stone paved passageway and tie up her asparagus in bunches. But she had scarcely drawn up to the threshold the stool which always stood ready, than she heard, over in the little house with three windows where Frau Nimptsch lived, a back window pushed up vigorously and a moment later hooked in place. And then she saw Lena with a lilac and white jacket over her woolen skirt and a cap on her ash-blond hair, waving a friendly greeting to her.

Frau Dörr returned the greeting with equal warmth and said: "The window always open; that's right, Lena. It is already beginning to grow hot. Some change must be coming."

"Yes. And mother already has her headache from the heat, and so I would rather iron in the back room. It is pleasanter here too; at the front we don't see anybody."

"That is so," answered Frau Dörr. "I believe I will come over to the window for a bit. I can always work better when I have some one to talk to."

"How kind and good you are, Frau Dörr. But right here by the window the sun is so strong."

"That will do no harm, Lena. I will bring my market umbrella along, the old thing is covered with patches. But it serves its purpose still."

And within five minutes, good Frau Dörr had moved her stool over by the window and sat there as comfortable and self-satisfied as if she were at the regular market. Inside the room Lena had put the ironing board across two chairs close to the window and stood so near it that it would have been easy to reach her with one's hand. Meanwhile the flatiron moved busily back and forth. And Frau Dörr

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When one has made one's bed, one must lie in it. But why are we talking about Dörr and strokes, and his bow legs. Good Lord, Lena, there are plenty of other folks who are as straight as a fir tree. Aren't there, Lena?"

At this Lena grew still more rosy than before, and said: "The charcoal is cold." And stepping back from the board, she went to the stove and shook the coal back among the embers, so as to take out a new one. All this was the work of a moment. And now with a quick turn of the hand she slipped the new hot coal from the tongs into the iron, shut the little door, and only then noticed that Frau Dörr was still waiting for an answer. But to make sure, the good woman asked the question over again and added: "Is he coming to-day?"

"Yes. At least he promised to."

"Now tell me, Lena," went on Frau Dörr, "How did it really begin? Mother Nimptsch never says much, and if she does say anything, it doesn't amount to much, and I never get the ins and outs of it. For she only tells part and that all confused. Now do tell me. Is it true that you met in Stralau?"

"Yes, Frau Dörr, it was in Stralau, on Easter Monday, but it was already as warm as if it were Whitsunday, and because Lina Gansauge likes boating, we took a skiff; and Lina's brother Rudolph, whom I think you know, took the rudder."

"Heavens, Rudolph. Rudolph is a mere boy."

"That is so. But he thought he knew all about it, and he kept saying: 'You must sit still, girls; you rock the boat so,' for he speaks with such a frightful Berlin accent. But we didn't think of doing such a thing, because we soon saw that his steering wasn't good for much. But by and by we forgot all about it, and let ourselves go, and joked with those we met, and splashed each other with water. And in the only boat that was going in the same direction that we were, sat a pair of very fine gentlemen, who saluted us, and we were so reckless that we returned their greetings and Lina even waved her handkerchief, and behaved as if she knew the gentlemen, which however was not the case, and she only wanted to show off, because she is so young. And while we were laughing and joking like that, and only play-

ing with the oars, we saw all at once that the steamer from Treptow was coming towards us, and as you can imagine, dear Frau Dörr, we were frightened to death and called out to Rudolph that he must steer us out of the way. But the boy had lost his head and just steered us round and round in a circle. And then we began to scream and we should surely have been run down if the two gentlemen in the other boat had not at that very moment taken pity on us in our trouble. With a couple of strokes they reached us and while one of them took firm hold of us with a boat hook and made us fast to their boat, the other rowed their boat and ours out of the wake of the steamboat, and only once more did it seem as if the big waves would capsize us. The captain shook his fist at us (I saw that for all my fright), but that was soon over and in another minute we had reached Stralau and the two gentlemen, to whom we owed our rescue, jumped out and gave us their hands and helped us out like regular escorts. And so there we stood on the slip at Tübbecke's, feeling very bashful and Lena was crying softly and only Rudolph, who is always obstinate and boastful, and doesn't like soldiers, looked sullenly before him, as if to say: 'Nonsense, I could have steered you out all right myself.'

"Yes, that is what he is, a boastful young rascal; I know him. But now tell me about the two gentlemen. That is the chief thing. . . ."

"Well, they did what they could for us and then took their places at another table and kept looking over at us. And when we were ready to go home, towards seven o'clock, and it was growing a little dark, one of them came to us and asked "whether he and his friend might offer to escort us?" And I laughed rather recklessly and said, "they had rescued us and one must not refuse anything to one's rescuer. But they had really better think about it a little, for we lived almost at the other end of the earth. And it would be really quite a journey." Thereupon he answered politely, "All the better." And meanwhile the other man had come up. . . . Ah, dear Frau Dörr, perhaps it was not right, to talk so freely at first sight, but one of them took my fancy, and I never knew how to put on any prim airs. And so

we walked all the long way home together, first by the Spree and then by the canal."

"And how about Rudolph!"

"He followed after, as if he had nothing to do with us, but he used his eyes and noticed everything. And that was quite right; for Lina is only eighteen and is still a good, innocent child!"

"Do you think so?"

"Certainly, Frau Dörr. You only need to look at her. You can see that at once."

"Yes, usually. But once in a while you can't. And so they saw you home?"

"Yes, Frau Dörr."

"And afterwards?"

"Yes, afterwards. But you know already how it was afterwards. He came the following day to inquire. And ever since he has come often, and I am always glad when he comes. Heavens, it does make one happy to see a little of life. It is often so lonely, away out here. And you know, Frau Dörr, mother has nothing against it and always says: 'Child, that does no harm. Before you know it, you will be old.'"

"Yes indeed," said Frau Dörr, "I have often heard Frau Nimptsch speak like that. And she is quite right too. That is to say, just as one takes it, and to live according to the catechism is really better and, so to speak, actually the best way. You may take my word for it. But I know very well, things do not always go that way, and a great many are not willing to follow those rules. And if one will not, one will not, and things must take their own course as they usually do, so long as one is honest and decent and keeps his word. And naturally, whatever happens, one must put up with it and must not be surprised. And if one knows all this and keeps it in mind, well, then it is not so bad. And really, fanciful notions are the only thing that does any harm."

"Oh, dear Frau Dörr," laughed Lena, "what can you be thinking of? Fanciful notions! I have no fancy notions. If I love anyone, I love him. And that is enough for me. And I want nothing more from him, nothing at all. And

it makes me happy that my heart beats so and that I count the hours till he comes, and that I cannot wait until I see him again, that is my joy, and it is enough for me."

"Yes," said Frau Dörr smiling to herself, "that is right, that is as it should be. But Lena, is his name really Botho? No one could have such a name; it is no sort of a Christian name."

"But it is, Frau Dörr," and Lena seemed as if she wanted to prove the fact that there were such names. But before she could succeed, Sultan barked and one could plainly hear the sound of some one entering from the corridor. The letter carrier came in and brought two orders for Dörr and a letter for Lena.

"My Lord, Hahnke," exclaimed Frau Dörr to the man on whose brow the great drops stood, "you are dripping with sweat. Is it so frightfully hot? And only half-past nine. I see very well that there isn't much fun in being a letter carrier."

And the good soul started to go and get a glass of fresh milk. But Hahnke refused with thanks. "I have no time, Frau Dörr. Some other day." And with these words he left at once.

Meanwhile Lena had opened her letter.

"Well, what does he say?"

"He isn't coming to-day, but to-morrow. Oh, what a long time it is till to-morrow. It is a good thing that I have work; the more work the better. And this afternoon I'll come over to your garden and help you dig. But I don't want Dörr to be there."

"The Lord forbid."

And then they separated and Lena went into the front room to give her old mother the dish of asparagus from Frau Dörr.

CHAPTER IV

AND now the next evening had come, the time for Baron Botho's promised visit. Lena was walking up and down in the front garden, but in the large front room, Frau Nimptsch sat as usual by the hearth, while to-day again the whole Dörr family had grouped themselves around her. Frau Dörr was knitting with big wooden needles on a blue woolen jacket for her husband, and the work, as yet quite shapeless, lay on her lap like a great fleece. Near her, with his legs comfortably crossed, Dörr was smoking a clay pipe, while his son sat in a big grandfather's chair close to the window, leaning his red head against the "wing" of the chair. Every morning he was up by cockcrow, so to-day he had once more fallen asleep through weariness. There was but little talk, and so nothing was to be heard but the clicking of the needles and the chattering of the squirrel, which from time to time came out of his box and gazed curiously about. The only light came from the fire on the hearth and the afterglow of the sunset.

Frau Dörr sat so that she could look along the garden path and in spite of the twilight she could see who was coming along the road, past the hedge.

"Ah, there he comes," said she. "Now, Dörr, just let your pipe go out. You are just like a chimney to-day, puffing and smoking all day long. And such a stinking old pipe as yours is not fit for everyone."

Dörr did not let such speeches trouble him much and before his wife could say any more or repeat her verdict, the Baron came in. He was visibly mellow, as he had just come from a punch bowl, which had been the subject of a wager at the club, and said, as he took Frau Nimptsch's hand: "Good evening, mother. I hope all is well with you. Ah, and Frau Dörr; and Herr Dörr, my favorite old friend. See here, Dörr, what do you say to the weather? Specially ordered for you and for me too. My meadows at home, that

are under water four years out of five and bear nothing but crow's foot, such weather will do them good. And it will do Lena good too; she can stay out of doors more; she is growing too pale to suit me."

Meanwhile Lena had drawn up a wooden chair near her old mother, because she knew that this was Baron Botho's favorite place; but Frau Dörr, who was fully impressed with the idea that a Baron must occupy the seat of honor, had meanwhile risen, and with the blue fleecy mass trailing after her, she called out to her stepson: "Will you get up! I say, now. If there is nothing in him, it's no use to expect anything from him." The poor boy stood up, all stupid and sleepy and was going to give up his seat, but the Baron would not allow it. "For heaven's sake, dear Frau Dörr, leave the poor boy alone. I would far rather sit on a bench, like my friend Dörr here."

And therewith he pushed the chair, which Lena still had ready for him, beside the old mother and said as he sat down:

"Here beside Frau Nimptsch is the best place. I know of no other fireplace that I am as fond of; there is always fire, always warmth. Yes, Mutterchen, that is true, this is the best place."

"Oh my soul," said the old woman. "This is the best place! In an old washerwoman's house."

"Certainly. And why not? Every class and calling is worthy of respect. And a washerwoman too. Do you know, Mutterchen, that here in Berlin there was a famous poet who wrote a poem about his old washerwoman?"

"Is it possible?"

"Of course it is possible. Moreover it is true. And do you know what he said at the end? He said that he wished he could live and die like his old washerwoman. Yes, that is what he said."

"Is it possible?" said the old woman to herself once more, simpering a little.

"And do you know, Mutterchen, now don't you forget it, he was quite right, and I say the very same? Oh yes, you laugh to yourself. But just look about you here. How do you live? Like the good Lord in France. In the first place,

you have your house and hearth, and then the garden and Frau Dörr. And then you have Lena. Haven't you? But what has become of her?"

He would have gone on talking, but just then Lena came in with a tray, on which was a carafe of water and some cider, for which the Baron had a preference not easily to be understood, but for his belief in its wonderful curative properties.

"Why Lena, how you spoil me. But you should not offer it to me so formally. It seems just as if I were at the club. You must bring it to me in your hand, it tastes best that way. And now give me your little hand, and let me stroke it. No, no, the left one; that is nearest the heart. And now sit right there, between Herr and Frau Dörr, so that you will be opposite me and I can see you all the time. I have been happy all day, looking forward to this time."

Lena laughed.

"Perhaps you don't believe it? But I can prove it to you, Lena, for I have brought you something from the fine party that we had yesterday. And when one has a little present to bring, he always feels happy about the girl who is to receive it. Isn't that so, my dear Dörr?"

Dörr grinned, but Frau Dörr said: "Lord, he? He bring presents? Dörr is all for scraping and saving. That is the way with gardeners. But I am curious to see what the Herr Baron has brought."

"Well, then I will not keep you waiting any longer, or else dear Frau Dörr might think I have brought a golden slipper or some such thing out of a fairy story. But this is all it is."

And therewith he gave Lena a paper bag, from which, unless all signs failed, the fringed ends of some snapping bonbons peeped out.

They proved to be snapping bonbons and the bag was passed around.

"But now we must pull one, Lena. Hold on tight and shut your eyes."

Frau Dörr was delighted when the cracker snapped, and still more so when Lena's forefinger began to bleed. "That doesn't hurt, Lena, I know it doesn't. It is just like a

bride who pricks her finger. I used to know one who was so crazy about it, that she kept pricking herself and sucked and sucked, as if it were something wonderful.

Lena blushed. But Frau Dörr did not notice and went on: "And now read the verse, Herr Baron."

And this is what he read:

> When two forget themselves for love,
> God and the angels rejoice above.

"Heavens," said Frau Dörr, folding her hands. "That is just like something out of a song book. Is the verse always so pious?"

"I hope not," said Botho. "Not always. Come, dear Frau Dörr, let us pull one and see what we shall get out of it."

And then he pulled again and read:

> Where Love's dart has struck well,
> Wide open stand both heaven and hell.

"Now, Frau Dörr, what do you say to that? It sounds different, doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Frau Dörr, "it sounds different. But I don't quite like it. . . . If I pull a bonbon. . . ."

"Well?"

"Then I don't want anything about hell to come out, I don't want to hear that there is any such thing."

"Nor I either,' laughed Lena. "Frau Dörr is quite right: for that matter, she is always right. But really, when one reads such a verse, one has always something to start with, I mean to begin a conversation with, for the beginning is always the hardest, just as it is with writing letters. And I simply cannot imagine how you can begin a conversation at once with no more ado, with so many strange ladies, for you are not all acquainted with each other."

"Oh, my dear Lena," said Botho, "it isn't so hard as you think. It is really quite easy. If you like, I will give you a dinner-table conversation now."

Frau Dörr and Frau Nimptsch said that they would like to hear it and Lena too nodded her assent.

"Now," went on Baron Botho, "you must imagine that you are a little Countess. And I have just escorted you to the

table and sat down and we are taking the first spoonful of soup."

"Very well. But what now?"

"And now I say to you: 'If I am not mistaken, I saw you yesterday at the flower show, you and your mother together. It is not surprising. The weather entices us out every day now and we might almost say that it is fit for travelling. Have you made any plans for the summer, Countess?' And now you answer, that unfortunately nothing is settled yet, because your papa is determined to go to Bavaria, while your dearest wish is to see Saxon Switzerland with the Königstein and the Bastei."

"It really is," laughed Lena.

"You see, that goes very well. And then I go on: 'Yes, gracious Countess, in that we share the same tastes. I prefer Saxon Switzerland to any other part of the world, even to the actual Switzerland itself. One cannot always revel in the grander aspects of nature, and clamber and get out of breath all the time. But Saxon Switzerland! Heavenly, ideal. There is Dresden; in a quarter or a half hour I can be there, and I can see pictures, the theatre, the great gardens, the Zwinger, and the green vault. Do not neglect to see the tankard with the foolish virgins, and above all things that cherry stone, on which the whole of the Lord's prayer is carved. It can only be seen through the magnifying glass.'"

"So that is the way you talk!"

"Exactly, my darling. And when I have paid sufficient attention to my left-hand neighbor, that is, the Countess Lena, I turn to my right-hand neighbor, that is, to Madame the Baroness Dörr. . . ."

Frau Dörr was so delighted that she slapped her knee with a loud noise. . . .

"So I am to converse with Madame the Baroness Dörr? And what shall we talk about? Well, say we talk about mushrooms."

"But, great heavens, mushrooms. About mushrooms, Herr Baron, that would never do."

"Oh why not, why shouldn't it do, dear Frau Dörr? That is a very serious and instructive subject and is more impor-

tant than you think. I once visited a friend in Poland, a comrade in my regiment and also during the war, who lived in a great castle; it was red and had two huge towers, and was so fearfully old, that you never see anything like it nowadays. And the last room was his living room; for he was unmarried, because he was a woman hater. . . ."

"Is it possible?"

"And everywhere the old rotten boards were trodden through and wherever there were a couple of boards lacking, there was a mushroom bed, and I passed by all the mushroom beds, until at last I came to his room."

"Is it possible?" repeated Frau Dörr and added: "Mushrooms! But one cannot always be talking about mushrooms."

"No, not always. But really quite often, and anyway it makes no difference what you talk about. If it isn't mushrooms it is 'champignons,' and if it is not the red castle in Poland it is Schloss Tegel or Saatwinkel, or Valentinswerder. Or Italy or Paris, or the city railway, or whether the Panke should be filled in. It is all the same. One can always talk a little about anything, whether it is especially pleasing or not. And 'yes' is just as good as 'no.'"

"But," said Lena, "if all the talk is so empty, I am surprised that you should go into such company."

"Oh you see beautiful women and handsome gowns and sometimes you catch glances that will betray a whole romance, if you look sharp. And anyway, it does not last long, so that you still have a chance to make up for lost time at the club. And at the club it is really charming, for there the artificial talk ceases and reality begins. Yesterday I took Pitt's black mare from him."

"Who is Pitt?"

"Oh, those are just names that we have among ourselves, and we use them when we are together. The Crown Prince himself says Vicky, in speaking of Victoria. It really is pleasant that there are such affectionate pet names. But listen, the concert is beginning over there. Can't we open the windows, so as to hear it better? You are already tapping with your foot. How would it do for us to take our places and try a Quadrille or a Française? We have three couples: Father Dörr and good Frau Nimptsch, and

Frau Dörr and I (I beg the honor) and then comes Lena with Hans."

Frau Dörr agreed at once, but Dörr and Frau Nimptsch declined, the latter because she was too old, the former because he was not used to such fine doings.

"Very well, Father Dörr. But then you must beat time; Lena, give him the tray and a spoon. And now come, ladies. Frau Dörr, your arm. And now Hans, wake up, be lively."

And both pairs actually took their places and Frau Dörr's stateliness visibly increased, as her partner began in a formal, dancing-master's French: *"En avant deux, Pas de Basque."* The poor sleepy freckle-faced boy looked about mechanically and allowed himself to be shoved here and there, but the three others danced as if they knew how, and old Dörr was so delighted that he jumped up and beat time on his tray with his knuckles instead of with his spoon. The spirit of other days seemed to return to Frau Nimptsch also, and since she found nothing better to do, she poked the fire until the flames leaped up.

This went on until the music stopped; Botho led Frau Dörr back to her place, but Lena still stood there, because the poor awkward boy did not know what he ought to do with her. But that suited Botho exactly, for when the music at the garden began again, he began to waltz with her, and to whisper to her, how charming she was, more charming than ever.

They had all grown warm, especially Frau Dörr, who now stood close to the open window. "Lord, how I am shivering," said she suddenly, whereupon Botho courteously sprang forward to close the window. But Frau Dörr would not hear of such a thing and said, the fine people were all wild about fresh air, and many of them so much so that the bed coverings froze to their mouths in winter. Their breath was just like the steam from the spout of the kettle. So the window must stay open, she would not give up that point. But if dear Lena had something comforting to give them, something to warm the cockles of the heart . . .

"Certainly, Frau Dörr, whatever you want. I can make tea, or punch, or better still, I have the cherry brandy, that

you gave Mother Nimptsch and me last Christmas for my big Christmas cake."

And before Frau Dörr could decide between punch and tea, the flask of cherry brandy was already there, with small and large glasses which each could fill according to their own desire. And now Lena went around, the black kettle in her hand, and poured the boiling water into the glasses. "Not too much, Lena, not too much. Let us get the good of it. Water takes away the strength." And in a moment the room was full of the rising aroma of cherry brandy.

"How nicely you did that," said Botho, as he sipped from his glass. "Lord knows, I had nothing yesterday, nor to-day at the club that tasted like this. Hurrah for Lena! But the chief credit of it all belongs to our friend, Frau Dörr, because she had that shivering fit, and so I am going to drink a second health. Frau Dörr; Hurrah for Frau Dörr."

"Long may she live," shouted all the group together, and old Dörr began to thump his tray with his knuckles again.

They all pronounced it a delicate drink, far finer than punch extract, which in summer always tastes of sour lemon, because you mostly get old bottles, which have been standing in the hot sun, in shop windows, ever since Shrove Tuesday. But cherry brandy was something wholesome and never spoiled, and rather than poison one's self with that bitter almond poison one ought to take some proper good stuff, at least a bottle.

It was Frau Dörr who made this remark, and her husband, who did not want things to go too far, perhaps because he knew his wife's pet weakness, urged their departure: "There will be another day to-morrow."

Botho and Lena asked them to stay a while longer. But good Frau Dörr, who well knew "that one must yield at the proper time, in order to keep the upper hand," merely said: "Never mind, Lena. I know him; he wants to go to bed with the birds." "Well," said Botho, "what is settled is settled. But at least we will escort the Dörrs home."

And therewith everybody went out, excepting old Frau Nimptsch, who looked after her departing friends amiably, nodding her head, and then got up and seated herself in the big grandfather chair.

CHAPTER V

LENA and Botho paused before the "castle" with the green and red painted tower and asked Dörr with considerable formality for permission to go into the garden and walk there for half an hour. The evening was so fine. Father Dörr muttered that he could not leave his property in better hands, whereupon the young couple took leave, bowing courteously, and went into the garden. Everything was already quiet, and only Sultan, whom they had to pass, got up, and whimpered until Lena had stroked him. After that he crawled back into his kennel.

In the garden all was perfume and freshness, for all the way along the principal path, between the currant and gooseberry bushes, grew gilly flowers and mignonette, whose delicate perfume mingled with the more powerful odour of the thyme beds. Nothing stirred in the trees, and only the fireflies darted through the air.

Lena was hanging on Botho's arm and they walked together to the end of the garden, where a bench stood between two silver poplars.

"Shall we sit down?"

"No," said Lena, "not now," and she turned into a side path bordered with tall raspberry bushes which nearly overtopped the garden fence. "I love to walk leaning on your arm. Tell me about something—something really pretty. Or ask me about something."

"Very well. Are you willing that I should have more of a friendship with the Dörrs?"

"As far as I am concerned."

"A curious couple. And moreover, I think, they are happy. He has to do as she wishes, and yet he is far cleverer than she."

"Yes," said Lena, "he is cleverer, but then he is miserly and hard-hearted and that makes him docile, because he always has a bad conscience. She looks after him sharply

and will not allow it, if he tries to overreach anyone. And that is what he is afraid of, and that makes him yielding."

"Is that all?"

"Perhaps love, too, if it does sound strange. I mean love on his side. For in spite of his fifty-six years or more he is perfectly wild over his wife, simply because she is stout. Both of them have made me the most wonderful confessions about that. But I confess frankly, she is not to my taste."

"But you are wrong there, Lena; she makes quite a figure."

"Yes," laughed Lena, "she makes a figure, but she has none. Can't you see, that her hips are a hand's breath too high? But you never see anything like that, and 'figure' and 'imposing' are every other word with you, without any concern as to the origin of that 'imposing figure.'"

Chatting and teasing each other thus they paused and stooped down to see if they could find an early strawberry in the bed that lay in front of the hedge and fence. Finally Lena found what she wanted, took the stem of a perfect beauty between her lips and came close up to Botho and looked at him.

He was nothing loth, plucked the berry from her lips and embraced and kissed her.

"My sweet Lena, you did that just right. But just hear how Sultan is barking; he wants to get to you; shall I let him loose?"

"No, if he is here, you are only half mine. And if you keep on talking about 'stately Frau Dörr,' then I have as good as nothing left of you at all."

"Good," laughed Botho, "Sultan may stay where he is. I am contented. But I want to talk more about Frau Dörr. Is she really so good?"

"Yes, she really is, for all that she says strange things—things that sound as if they have a double meaning and perhaps really have. But she knows nothing about that, and in her doings and behavior there is not the least thing that could recall her past."

"Has she a past then?"

"Yes. At least she had some sort of a relation for years

and 'went with him' as she calls it. And there is no sort of doubt that there was plenty of talk about that affair, and of course about good Frau Dörr herself. And she herself must have given occasion for it again and again. Only she is so simple that she never gave it a thought, still less reproached anyone. She speaks of it as an unpleasant service, that she faithfully and honorably fulfilled, simply from a sense of duty. You may laugh, and it does sound queer. But I don't know any other way to tell it. And now let us leave Frau Dörr alone and sit down and look at the crescent moon."

And in fact, the moon stood just above the elephant house, which, in the flood of silver light, looked even more fantastic than usual. Lena pointed to it, drew her hood closer and hid her face on Botho's breast.

So the minutes passed by, silent and happy, and only when Lena aroused, as if from a dream that escaped her, and sat up again, did she say: "What were you thinking of? But you must tell me the truth."

"What was I thinking of, Lena? Why, I am almost ashamed to tell you. I had some sentimental thoughts and was thinking of our kitchen garden at Castle Zehden, which is laid out so much like this of the Dörr's, the same lettuce beds with cherry trees between and I would almost wager, just as many bird houses. And even the asparagus beds run the same way. And I would walk amongst them with my mother and if she was in a good humor, she would give me the knife and let me help her. But woe be unto me if I were careless and cut the asparagus stalk too long or too short. My mother's hand was hasty."

"I well believe it. And I always feel as if I ought to be afraid of her."

"Afraid? How so? Why, Lena?"

Lena laughed merrily and yet her laughter was a trifle forced. "You must not take it into your head that I have any intention of presenting myself before the gracious lady; you must just feel as if I had said that I am afraid of the Empress. That would not make you think that I meant to go to court? No, don't be afraid; I shall never complain of you."

"No, you wouldn't do that. You are much too proud for that, and then you are a regular little democrat, and every friendly word has to be almost choked out of you. Isn't that so? But however that may be, describe my mother, as you imagine her. How does she look?"

"Very much like you: tall and slender and blond and blue-eyed."

"Poor Lena (and now the laugh was on his side), you have missed it this time. My mother is a little woman with bright black eyes and a long nose."

"I don't believe it. It isn't possible."

"And yet it is true. You must remember that I have a father too. But that never occurs to you. You always think that you women are the principal thing. And now tell me something about my mother's character. But make a better guess."

"I think of her as very much concerned for the welfare of her children."

"Correct."

". . . And that all her children must make wealthy, yes very wealthy marriages. And I know too, whom she has ready for you."

"An unfortunate woman, whom you . . ."

"How you do mistake me. Believe me, that I have you now, for this very hour, is my joy. What follows does not trouble me. One of these days you will have flown away. . . ."

He shook his head.

"Don't shake your head; what I say is true. You love me and are true to me; at least in my love I am childish and vain enough to believe so. But you will fly away, I see that clearly enough. You will have to. The saying is that love makes us blind, but it also makes us see far and clear."

"Ah, Lena, you do not know how dearly I love you."

"Oh yes. I do. And I know too that you think of your Lena as something set apart, and every day you think, 'if only she were a Countess.' But it is too late for that now, I can never bring it about. You love me, and you are weak. That cannot be altered. All handsome men are weak and the stronger spirit rules over them. . . . And the stronger

spirit . . . now, who is that? Either it is your mother, or people's talk, or your connections. Or perhaps all three . . . But just look."

And she pointed towards the Zoological Garden, where through the darkness of the trees and foliage a rocket rushed hissing into the air and with a puff burst into a countless shower of sparks. A second followed the first and so it went on, as if they were chasing and trying to catch up with one another, until of a sudden the rockets ceased and the shrubbery began to glow in a green and red light. A couple of birds cried out harshly in their cages and then after a long pause the music began again.

"Do you know, Botho, what I would give, if I could lean on your arm and walk with you over there up and down that school for scandal, as safely as here among the box borders, and if I could say to everyone: 'Yes, you may wonder at us, he is he and I am I, and he loves me and I love him,'—do you know what I would give? But don't guess, for you never could. You only know yourself and your club and your life. Oh, the poor little life."

"Don't speak so, Lena."

"Why not? One must look everything squarely in the face and not whiten anything over, and above all one must not whiten one's self. But it is growing cold and they are through over there. That is the last piece that they are playing now. Come, we will go in and sit by the fireside, the fire will not be out yet and my mother has long since gone to bed."

So they walked back along the garden path, she leaning lightly on his shoulder. The lights were all out in the "castle" and only Sultan gazed after them, thrusting his head out of his kennel. But he did not move and only some dim, sullen thoughts passed through his brain.

CHAPTER VI

IT was the next week after the events narrated, and the chestnut trees were already in bloom. They were blossoming also in Bellevue Street. Baron Botho lived here in a ground floor apartment that extended through from a front balcony to one that opened on a garden: there was a living-room, a dining-room, and a bedroom, which were distinguished by a tasteful furnishing decidedly beyond the means of their owner. In the dining-room there were two pictures of still life by Hertel and between these a bear hunt, an admirable copy from Rubens, while in the living-room the "show piece" was a storm at sea by Andreas Achenbach, surrounded by several smaller pictures by the same artist. The storm picture had come into Baron Botho's possession by chance at a lottery, and by means of this beautiful and valuable work he had gained the reputation of a connoisseur and especially of an admirer of Achenbach. He joked freely about this and used to declare "that his luck at the lottery cost him quite dear, because it continually led him to make new purchases, adding that it was perhaps the same with all good fortune.

Before the sofa, the plush of which was covered with a Persian rug, the coffee apparatus stood on a malachite table, while on the sofa itself all kinds of political journals were lying about, and amongst these some whose presence in this place seemed rather peculiar, and could only be explained by Baron Botho's favorite phrase "fiddlesticks before politics." Stories which bore the stamp of imagination, so-called "pearls," amused him the most. A canary bird, whose cage always stood open at breakfast time, was flying as usual to light on the hand or shoulder of his too-indulgent master, who, instead of being impatient, put his paper aside every time to stroke his little favorite. But if he omitted the caress, the little creature would cling to the reader's neck and beard and chirp long and persistently until he had

his way. "All favorites are alike," said Baron Rienäcker, "they expect humility and obedience."

Just now the door bell rang and the servant came in to bring the letters. One, a gray, square envelope, was open and bore a three pfennig stamp. "Hamburg lottery tickets or new cigars," said Rienäcker, and threw envelope and contents aside without further consideration. "But this one . . . Ah, from Lena. I will save this for the last, unless this third sealed one contends for the honor. The Osten crest. Then it is from Uncle Kurt Anton: the Berlin postmark means that he is already here. What can he want now? Ten to one, he wants me to breakfast with him or to buy a saddle or to escort him to Renz, or perhaps to Kroll also; most likely I am to do the one and not omit the other."

And he took a knife from the window-sill and cut open the envelope, on which he had recognized also Uncle Osten's handwriting, and took out the letter. The letter read:

"HOTEL BRANDENBURG, NUMBER 15

"MY DEAR BOTHO:

"An hour ago I arrived safely at the eastern depot, warned by your old Berlin notice 'Beware of Pickpockets,' and have engaged rooms in the Hotel Brandenburg, which is to say, in the same old place; a real conservative is conservative even in small things. I shall only stay two days, for your air is too heavy for me. This is a smothering hole. But I will tell you everything by word of mouth. I shall expect you at one o'clock at Hiller's. After that we will go and buy a saddle. And then in the evening we will go to Renz. Be punctual. Your old Uncle,

KURT ANTON."

Rienäcker laughed. "I thought as much! And yet there is an innovation. Formerly it was Borchardt, and now it is Hiller. Oh, oh, Uncle dear, a true conservative is conservative even in small things. . . . And now for my dear Lena. . . . What would Uncle Kurt Anton say if he knew in what company his letter and his commands arrived."

And while he was speaking, he opened Lena's note and read:

"It is now five whole days since I last saw you. Is it going to be a whole week? And I was so happy that evening that I thought you simply must come again the next day. And you were so dear and good. Mother is already teasing me, and she says: 'He will

not come again.' Oh, what a pain in my heart that gives me, because I know that it must happen some time and because I feel that it might happen any day. I was reminded of that again yesterday. For when I just wrote you that I had not seen you for five whole days, I did not tell the truth; I did see you yesterday, but secretly, by stealth, on the Corso. Just fancy, I too was there, naturally far back in a side path and I watched you riding back and forth for an hour. Oh I was extremely happy, for you were the most imposing rider (almost as imposing as Frau Dörr, who sends her regards to you), and I was so proud just to see you that I didn't even grow jealous. I mean I was jealous only once. Who was the pretty blonde, with the two white horses? They were simply garlanded with flowers, and the flowers were so thick that there were no leaves nor stems. I never saw anything so beautiful in my life. When I was a child I would have thought that she was a Princess, but now I know that Princesses are not always the most beautiful. Yes, she was pretty and you liked her, I could see that, and she liked you too. But her mother, who set beside the pretty blonde, you liked still better. And that angered me. I grant you a really young woman, if it must be so. But an old woman! ~~and even a mamma?~~ No, no, ~~she has had her share.~~ In any case, my own Botho, you see that you will have to quiet me and make me happy again. I shall expect you to-morrow or the next day. And if you cannot come in the evening, come in the daytime, even if only for a minute. I am so troubled about you, that is to say, about myself. But you understand me already. Your

"LENA."

"Your Lena," said he, repeating the signature, once more to himself and a sort of restlessness took possession of him, because all kinds of conflicting emotions passed through his ~~heart: love, anxiety, fear.~~ Then he read the letter through again. At two or three passages he could not forbear to make a little mark with his silver pencil, not through pedantry, but through pure delight. "How well she writes! The handwriting certainly, and the spelling almost . . . *Stiehl* instead of *Stiel*. . . . Well, why not? Stiehl was a much dreaded school inspector, but the Lord be praised, I am not. And *"empfelen."* Shall I be put out with her over f and h? Good Lord, how many people can spell "empfehlen" properly? The young Countesses cannot always, and the old ones never. So where is the harm! Really, the letter is like Lena herself, good, true and trustworthy, and the mistakes make it only the more charming."

He leaned back in his chair and covered his eyes and brow with his hand: "Poor Lena, what is to come of all this?

It would have been better for us both, if there had been no Easter Monday this time. Why indeed should there be two holidays? Why Treptow and Stralau and boating excursions? And now my Uncle! Either he is coming as a messenger from my mother, or else he has plans for me himself, of his own initiative. Well, we shall see. He has never been through any training in diplomatic disguises, and even if he has sworn ten oaths to keep silence, he comes out with everything. I shall soon find out, for all that I am even less experienced than he in the art of intrigue."

Thereupon he pulled out a drawer of his writing table, in which there were already other letters of Lena's, tied up with a red ribbon. And now he rang for the servant to help him to dress. "So, John, that is all I need. . . . And now don't forget to draw the blinds down. And if anyone should come and ask for me, I shall be at the barracks till twelve, at Hiller's after one and at Renz's in the evening. And be sure to raise the blinds again at the right time, so that I shall not find a bake-oven again. And leave the lamp lighted in the front room, but not in my bedroom; it seems as if the flies are possessed this year. Do you understand?"

"Very good, Herr Baron."

And during this dialogue, which was half carried on in the corridor, Rienäcker passed through the vestibule, and out in the garden he playfully pulled the braids of the porter's little girl, who was stooping over her little brother's wagon, and got in return a furious glance, which changed to one of delight as soon as she recognized him.

And now at last he stepped through the gate to the street. Here he saw beneath the green bower of the chestnut trees the men and vehicles passing silently to and fro between the great gate and the Zoological Garden, as if through the glass of a camera. "How beautiful! This is surely one of the best of worlds."

"Very well, Chablis, and fresh water. But not from the tap. I want it cold in a carafe. And now, gentlemen, be seated: my dear Wedell, sit here, and Botho there. If only we hadn't this heat, this dog-day weather coming so early. Air, gentlemen, air. Your beautiful Berlin, (which, so they tell me, grows more beautiful all the time, at least those who know no better say so), your beautiful Berlin has everything but air." And with these words he threw open the big window sash, and sat so that he had the large middle opening directly opposite him.

The lobster had not yet come, but the Chablis was already on the table. Old Baron Osten restlessly began to cut one of the rolls from the basket quickly and skilfully into diagonal strips, merely for the sake of having something to do. Then he laid down the knife again and offered his hand to Wedell. "I am endlessly grateful to you, Herr von Wedell, and it was a brilliant idea of Botho's to alienate your affections from the club for a couple of hours. I take it as a good omen, to have the privilege of meeting a Wedell immediately after my arrival in Berlin."

And now he began to fill the glasses, because he could not control his uneasiness any longer. He ordered a bottle of Clicquot to be set to cool and then went on: "Really, dear Wedell, we are related; there are no Wedells to whom we are not related, were it only through a bushel of peas; we all have Neumärk blood. And when I see the blue of my old dragoons once more, my heart jumps right up in my mouth. Yes, Herr von Wedell, old affection does not rust. But here comes the lobster. . . . Please bring me the big shears. The shears are always the best. . . . But, as I was saying, old love does not grow rusty, nor the edge of the blade either. And I wish to add, the Lord be praised. In those days we still had old Dobeneck. Heavens, what a man he was! A man like a child. But if things did not go well and would not work out properly, I should have liked to see the man who could keep his face under old Dobeneck's eye. He was a regular old East Prussian dating from the year '13 and '14. We were afraid of him, but we loved him too. For he was like a father. And, do you know, Herr von Wedell, who my riding master was . . .?"

mean. To be sure it was long ago, about forty years. Baron Osten."

"From Wietzendorf?"

"The same."

"Oh, I know him, at least by name. There is some relationship. My grandmother was an Osten. Is he the same who has the quarrel with Bismarck?"

"The same. I tell you what, Wedell, you had better come too. The club can wait and Pitt and Serge too; you can find them at three just as well as at one. The old gentleman is still wild over the blue and gold of the dragoons, and is enough of a Neumärker to consider every Wedell an acquisition."

"Very well, Rienäcker, but it is on your responsibility."

"With pleasure."

During this talk they had reached Hiller's, where the old Baron was already standing by the glass door looking out, for it was a minute after one. He made no comments, however, and was evidently overjoyed when Botho presented "Lieutenant von Wedell."

"Your nephew . . ."

"No excuses. Herr von Wedell, everyone who bears the name of Wedell is welcome to me, and doubly and trebly so when wearing this coat. Come, gentlemen, we will extricate ourselves from this mêlée of tables and chairs, and concentrate in the rear as well as we can. It is not Prussian to retreat, but here it does not matter." And therewith he preceded his guests to choose a good place, and after looking into several little private rooms, he decided on a rather large room, with walls of some leather colored material, which was not very light, in spite of the fact that it had a broad window in three parts, because this looked out on a narrow and dark court. The table was already laid for four, but in the twinkling of an eye the fourth cover was removed, and while the two officers placed their side arms in the corner of the window, the old Baron turned to the head waiter, who had followed at some distance, and ordered a lobster and some white Burgundy. "But what kind, Botho?"

"How would Chablis do?"

"Very well, Chablis, and fresh water. But not from the tap. I want it cold in a carafe. And now, gentlemen, be seated: my dear Wedell, sit here, and Botho there. If only we hadn't this heat, this dog-day weather coming so early. Air, gentlemen, air. Your beautiful Berlin, (which, so they tell me, grows more beautiful all the time, at least those who know no better say so), your beautiful Berlin has everything but air." And with these words he threw open the big window sash, and sat so that he had the large middle opening directly opposite him.

The lobster had not yet come, but the Chablis was already on the table. Old Baron Osten restlessly began to cut one of the rolls from the basket quickly and skilfully into diagonal strips, merely for the sake of having something to do. Then he laid down the knife again and offered his hand to Wedell. "I am endlessly grateful to you, Herr von Wedell, and it was a brilliant idea of Botho's to alienate your affections from the club for a couple of hours. I take it as a good omen, to have the privilege of meeting a Wedell immediately after my arrival in Berlin."

And now he began to fill the glasses, because he could not control his uneasiness any longer. He ordered a bottle of Clicquot to be set to cool and then went on: "Really, dear Wedell, we are related; there are no Wedells to whom we are not related, were it only through a bushel of peas; we all have Neumärk blood. And when I see the blue of my old dragoons once more, my heart jumps right up in my mouth. Yes, Herr von Wedell, old affection does not rust. But here comes the lobster. . . . Please bring me the big shears. The shears are always the best. . . . But, as I was saying, old love does not grow rusty, nor the edge of the blade either. And I wish to add, the Lord be praised. In those days we still had old Dobeneck. Heavens, what a man he was! A man like a child. But if things did not go well and would not work out properly, I should have liked to see the man who could keep his face under old Dobeneck's eye. He was a regular old East Prussian dating from the year '13 and '14. We were afraid of him, but we loved him too. For he was like a father. And, do you know, Herr von Wedell, who my riding master was . . .?"

At this point the champagne was brought in.

"My riding master was Manteuffel, the same to whom we owe everything that the army, and victory with the army, has made of us."

Herr von Wedell bowed, while Botho said softly: "Surely, one may well say so."

But that was not wise nor clever of Botho, as was soon manifest, for the old Baron, who was already subject to congestion, turned red all over his bald head and what little curly hair still remained on his temples seemed to curl still tighter. "I don't understand you, Botho; what do you mean by 'one may well say so,' that is the same as to say 'one might also not say so.' And I know, too, what all this points to. It signifies that a certain officer of Cuirassiers from the reserves, who, for the rest, held nothing in reserve, least of all revolutionary measures, it signifies, I say, that a certain man from Helberstadt with a sulphur-yellow collar. himself personally stormed St. Private and closed the great circle around Sedan. Botho, you ought not to come to me with any such tale as that. He was a young barrister and worked for the government at Potsdam, and what is more, under old Meding, who never spoke well of him, as I know, and for that matter, he never learned anything but how to write despatches. I am willing to grant him that much, he does understand that, or in other words, he is a quill driver. But it is not quill drivers who have made Prussia great. Was the hero of Fehrbellin a quill driver? Was the hero of Leuthen a quill driver? Was Blücher a quill driver, or York? The power of the Prussian pen is *here!* I cannot suffer this cult."

"But my dear Uncle . . ."

"But, but, I will tolerate no buts. Believe me, Botho, it takes years to settle such questions; I understand such things better. How is it then? He tips over the ladder by which he has climbed, and even suppresses the "Kreuzzeitung," and, to speak plainly, he ruins us; he despises us, he tells us foolish things, and if he takes a notion to, he denounces us for robbery or interception of documents and sends us to the fortress. But why do I say fortress? The fortress is for decent people; no, he sends us to the poor-

house to pluck wool. . . . But air, gentlemen, air. There is no air here. Damnable hole."

And he jumped up, and in addition to the middle window which was already open, he flung wide the two side windows also, so that the draught that passed through blew the curtains and the tablecloth about. Then, sitting down again, he took a piece of ice from the champagne cooler and passed it over his forehead.

"Ah," he went on, "this piece of ice is the best thing in the whole breakfast. . . . And now tell me, Herr von Wedell, am I right or not? Botho, with your hand on your heart, am I right? Is it not true ~~that one, as a member of~~ the Märkisch nobility, may talk oneself into a charge of high treason simply through the pure indignation of a nobleman? ~~Such a man . . . from one of our very finest families . . .~~ finer than Bismarck's, and so many have fallen for the throne and for the Hohenzollerns, that you could form a whole regimental company of them, a company with helmets, and the Boitzenburger to command them. Yes, my friends. And such an affront to such a family. And what for? Interception of documents, indiscretion, betrayal of official secrets. I should like to know if there is anything else left except child murder and offences against morality, and it is actually strange that they have not loaded those on also. But you gentlemen are not saying any thing. Speak out, I beg you. Believe me, I can listen to other opinions patiently; I am not like him; speak, Herr von Wedell, speak."

Wedell, whose embarrassment was increasing, sought for some soothing and reconciling words: "Certainly, Herr Baron, it is as you say. But, pardon me, at the time that the affair was decided, I heard many express the opinion, and the words have remained in my memory, that the weaker must give up all idea of crossing the path of the stronger, for that is impossible in life just as in politics. Once for all it is so: ~~might is more than right~~."

"And there is no gainsaying that, no appeal?"

"Oh yes, Herr Baron. Under some circumstances an appeal is possible. And, to be perfectly frank, I have known of cases where opposition was justified. What weakness

dare not venture, sincerity might, the sincerity of belief, the courage of conviction. In such cases resistance is not only a right but a duty. But who has this sincerity? Had he . . . But I will be silent, for I do not want to offend either you, Herr Baron, or the family to whom we have reference. But you know, even without my telling you, that he who had that audacity, had not such sincerity of belief. He who is merely the weaker should dare nothing, only the pure in heart should dare everything."

"Only the pure in heart should dare everything," repeated the old Baron, with such a roguish expression, that it seemed doubtful whether he was more impressed by the truth or by the untenability of the thesis. "The pure in heart should dare everything. A capital saying which I shall carry away with me. It will please my pastor, who undertook a controversy with me last autumn and demanded a strip of my land. Not for his own sake, the Lord forbid! but for the sake of principle, and of posterity, for which reasons he ought not to yield. The sly old fox. But the pure in heart should dare everything."

"Of course you would have to yield in the land quarrel with the pastor," said Botho. "I knew Schönemann long ago at Sellenthin's."

"Yes, he was a tutor there and knew no better than to shorten the lesson hours and lengthen the recreation hours. And he could play grace-hoops like a young marquis; really, it was a pleasure to watch him. But now he has been seven years in orders and you would never know the Schönemann who used to pay court to the charming mistress of the house. But I must admit this, he educated both the young ladies well, especially your Katherine. . . ."

Botho glanced timidly at his uncle, almost as if to beg him to be discreet. But the old Baron, delighted to have seized upon so favorable an opportunity to enter on his favorite theme, went on in exuberant and ever-increasing good humor: "There, there, Botho. Discretion. Nonsense! Wedell is from our region and must know the story just as well as anyone else. Why should we keep silence about such things? You are already as good as bound. And God knows, young man, when I pass the young girls in review,

you cannot find a better—teeth like pearls, and she is always laughing so that you can see the whole row. A flaxen blonde to tempt your kisses, and if I were only thirty years younger, I declare . . ."

Wedell, who noticed Botho's confusion, tried to come to his aid and said: "The Sellenthin ladies are all very pleasing, the mother as well as the daughters; last summer I met them in Norderney, and they were charming, but I would prefer the second. . . ."

"So much the better, Wedell. You will not come into any conflict and we can celebrate a double wedding. And Schönemann may be sure that if Kluckhuhn, who is touchy like all old people, agrees, I will not only put a spoke in his wheel, but I will give up the strip of parsonage land to him without further ado if I can see such a wedding within the year. You are rich, dear Wedell, and there is really no haste about you. But look at our friend Botho. That he looks so well nourished is no thanks to his sandy wastes, which, excepting a couple of meadows, are really nothing but a nursery of young pines, and still less to his eel pond. 'Eel pond,' sounds wonderful, you might almost say poetic. But that is all. One cannot live on eels. I know you do not like to hear about this, but so long as we are on the subject, I may as well come out with it. How do matters stand, then? Your grandfather had the timber cut down and your late father—a capital fellow, but I never saw anyone play the man of affairs so poorly and so expensively too—your late father, I say, divided up the five hundred acres of eastern farming-land among the Jeseritz peasants, and there is not much good land left, and the thirty thousand thalers are long since gone. If you were alone, it might do, but you must share with your brother, and at present the mamma, my sister Liebden, has the whole still in her hands, an admirable woman, clever and skilful, but she does not err on the saving side. Botho, what is the use of belonging to the Imperial Cuirassiers and what is the use of having a rich cousin, who is only waiting for you to come and seal and ratify by a formal proposal what your parents had already agreed upon when you were still children? Why consider longer? Listen, if I could go to your mother

to-morrow on my return and bring her the news: 'Dear Josephine, Botho consents; everything is arranged,' listen, boy, that would be something for an old uncle who means well by you to rejoice over. Speak to him, Wedell. It is time that he should quit this bachelor life. Otherwise he will squander his bit of property or get caught by some little bourgeoise. Am I right? Naturally. Done! And we must drink to the happy event. But not with these dregs. . . ." And he rang the bell. "A bottle of Heidsieck. The best brand."

CHAPTER VIII

AT about this same time there were at the club two young cavaliers, one of them, who was tall, slender and smooth-faced, belonged to the Gardes du Corps; the other, who was somewhat shorter, and had a full beard with only the regulation smooth chin, had been dismissed from the Pasewalkern. The white damask table cloth, which remained from their breakfast, had been turned back and the two were playing piquet on the bare half of the table.

"Six cards and four of a kind."

"Very well."

"And you?"

"Fourteen aces, three kings, three queens. . . . And you don't make a trick." And he laid his hand on the table and then pushed all the cards together while his companion shuffled.

"Did you know that Ella is about to be married?"

"What a pity!"

"Why a pity?"

"She can't jump through the hoop any more."

"Nonsense. The more they are married the slenderer they grow."

"Yet there are exceptions. Many names belonging to the aristocracy of the circus already appear in the third and fourth generation, which seems to point to some alternation of a slender and a stouter form, or if you like, to the new moon, the first quarter, &c."

"You are mistaken. *Error in calculo.* You forget that there may be adoptions. All these circus people are secretly 'Gichtelianer' and pass on their property, their rank and their names according to agreement. They seem the same and yet they are different. There is always fresh blood. Cut. . . . Besides that I have another bit of news. Afzelius is to join the General Staff."

"Which do you mean?"

"The one who belongs to the Uhlans."

"Impossible."

"Moltke values him highly and he must have done some excellent work."

"He does not impress me. It was all an affair of hunting libraries and plagiarizing. Any one who is a trifle ingenious can turn out books like Humboldt or Ranke."

"Four of a kind. Fourteen aces."

"Five sequence to king."

And while the trick was being played, one could hear from the billiard room near by the sound of the balls and the falling of the little pins.

In the two back rooms of the club, the narrow side of which looked out on a sunny but tiresome garden, there were in all only six or eight men, all silent, all more or less absorbed in their whist or dominoes, and not the least absorbed were the two men who had just been talking about Ella and Afzelius. The game ran high, and so the two did not look up until they saw, through an open curved niche, a new-comer approaching from the next room. It was Wedell.

"But Wedell, if you don't bring us a lot of news, we will excommunicate you."

"Pardon, Serge, there was no definite agreement."

"But almost. For the rest, you will find me personally in the most accommodating mood. How you can settle things with Pitt, who has just lost 150 points, is your affair."

Thereupon the two men pushed the cards aside and the young man whom Wedell had greeted as Serge took out his watch and said: "Quarter past three. Time for coffee. Some philosopher, and he must have been one of the greatest, once said that the best thing about coffee was that it was always suitable under all circumstances and at all times of day. Truly that was a wise saying. But where shall we take it? I think we had better sit outside on the terrace, right in the sun. The more one braves the weather the better one fares. Here, Pehlecke, three cups. I cannot listen to the falling of the pins any longer. It makes me nervous; outside, indeed, there is noise too, but it is different, and instead of the sharp strokes, we shall hear the rumbling and

thundering of the underground railway, and we can imagine that we are on Vesuvius or Ætna. And why not? All pleasures are in the last analysis imaginary, and whoever has the best imagination enjoys the most pleasure. Only unreality gives value and is actually the only reality."

"Serge," said the man who had been addressed as Pitt at the piquet table, "if you go on with your famous wise sayings, you will punish Wedell more severely than he deserves. Besides, you must have some mercy on me because I have been losing. So, we will stay here, with the lawn behind us, this ivy near us, and a view of a bare wall. A heavenly location for his Majesty's guards! What would old Prince Pückler have said to this club garden? Pehlecke, here, bring the table here, that will do. And, to finish with, you may bring us some of your very best lager. And now, Wedell, if you want to win forgiveness, give your cloak a shake, and see if you cannot shake a new war or some other big piece of news out of it. You are related to God in heaven through the Puttkamers. With which branch I need not say. What more is he brewing?"

"Pitt," said Wedell, "I beg you, don't ask me any questions about Bismarck. For in the first place, you know that I know nothing about such matters, because cousins in the seventeenth degree are not precisely the intimates and confidants of princes, and in the second place, I come, instead of from the Prince, direct from a shooting match where with a few hits and many, many misses, no other than his Highness was the target."

"And who was this bold shot?"

"The old Baron Osten, Rienäcker's uncle. A charming old gentleman and a good fellow. But of course a sly dog also."

"Like all Märkers."

"I am one myself."

"*Tant mieux.* Then you know all about it yourself. But out with it. What did the old fellow say?"

"A good many things. His political talk was hardly worth reporting, but another bit of news was all the more important: Rienäcker has a sharp corner to turn."

"And what corner?"

"He is about to marry."

"The one who belongs to the Uhlans."

"Impossible."

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"A good many things. His political talk was hardly worth reporting, but another bit of news was all the more important: Rienäcker has a sharp corner to turn."

"And what corner?"

"He is about to marry."

"And you call that a sharp corner to turn? I beg to disagree with you, Wedell; Rienäcker stands in a much more difficult position: he has 9000 marks a year and spends 12000, and that is the sharpest of all corners, at least sharper than the marriage corner. Marriage is no danger for Rienäcker, but a rescue. For that matter, I have seen it coming. And who is it then?"

"A cousin!"

"Naturally. A rescuer and a cousin are almost identical terms at present. And I will wager that her name is Paula. All cousins are named Paula these days."

"But this one is not."

"And her name?"

"Katherine."

"Katherine? Ah, now I know. Katherine Sellenthin. Hm! Not so bad, in fact a brilliant match. Old Sellenthin, he is the old man with the plaster over his eye, has six estates, and with the farms there are really thirteen. If divided in equal parts, Katherine will get the thirteenth thrown in. My congratulations."

"Do you know her?"

"Certainly. A wonderful flaxen-haired blonde with eyes as blue as forget-me-nots, but for all that she is not sentimental, and is less like the moon than like the sun. She was here at Frau Zulow's Pension, and at fourteen she was already surrounded and courted."

"At the Pension?"

"Not really at the Pension and not every day, but on Sundays when she went to lunch with old Osten, the one whom you have just seen. Katherine, Katherine Sellenthin! . . . she was like a rail then, and that is what we used to call her, and she was the most charming little hoyden that you can imagine. I can still see her braid of hair, which we always called the distaff. And Rienäcker will now have a chance to spin it off. Well, why not? It will not be so difficult for him."

"After all, it may be more difficult than many think," answered Wedell. "And while he certainly needs his finances improved, yet I am not sure that he would decide at once in favor of the blond beauty from his own province. For

you must know that Rienäcker has for some time past enjoyed another tint, indeed ash-blond, and if what Balafré lately told me is true, he has been seriously considering whether he should not raise his blanchisseuse to the rank of la dame blanche. He sees no distinction between Castle Avenal and Castle Zehden. A castle is a castle and, you know, Rienäcker, who for that matter, goes his own way in many things, was always in favor of naturalness."

"Yes," laughed Pitt. "That he was. But Balafré draws the long bow and invents interesting tales. You are sober, Wedell, and will not be ready to believe such made up nonsense."

"No, it is not imaginary," said Wedell. "But I believe what I know. Rienäcker, in spite of his six feet, or perhaps because of them, is weak and easily guided and is peculiarly gentle and tenderhearted."

"He certainly is. But circumstances will compel him and he will break away and free himself at the worst like a fox out of a trap. It is painful and a bit of one's life is left behind. But the main thing is to get out again—out, out and free. Long live Katherine! And Rienäcker! What does the proverb say? 'God helps those who help themselves.'"

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CHAPTER IX

THAT evening Botho wrote to Lena that he would come on the following day, perhaps even earlier than usual. And he kept his word and arrived an hour before sunset. Naturally he found Frau Dörr there. The air was very fine and not too warm, and after they had talked a while, Botho said:

"Perhaps we could go into the garden."

"Yes, either into the garden or somewhere else?"

"What do you mean?"

Lena laughed. "Don't be worried again, Botho. There is no one hiding in ambush and the lady with the pair of white horses and the wreaths of flowers will not cross your path."

"Then where shall we go, Lena?"

"Just out in the green meadows where you will have nothing but daisies and me. And perhaps Frau Dörr, too, if she will be so good as to go with us."

"Will she?" said Frau Dörr. "Surely she will. I feel much honored. But I must put myself to rights a little. I will be with you again directly."

"There is no need, Frau Dörr; we will call for you."

And so the plan was carried out, and as the young couple walked across the garden a quarter of an hour later, Frau Dörr was already standing at the door, a wrap on her arm and a marvellous hat on her head, a present from Dörr, who, like all misers, would buy something absurdly expensive once in a while.

Botho said something complimentary to the rather overdressed lady, and all three walked down the path and went out by a hidden side door and reached a little path, which before it led further and curved out into the open green fields ran along by the outer side of the garden fence where the nettles grew high.

"We will follow this path," said Lena. "It is the prettiest and the most solitary. No one comes here."

And certainly it was the loneliest path, far more silent and solitary than three or four other roads that ran parallel with it over the meadows towards Wilmersdorf and showed something of their own sort of suburban life. On one of these roads there were a good many sheds, between which there were horizontal bars somewhat like those used by gymnasts. These aroused Botho's curiosity, but before he could ask about them, the work going on answered his question: rugs and carpets were spread out on the frames and immediately began such a beating and banging with big sticks that a cloud of dust rose and nearly concealed the road.

Botho pointed out this dust and was beginning a discussion with Frau Dörr about the value or harmfulness of carpets, which, viewed in this light, are mere dirt catchers, "and if one has not a very strong chest one might get consumption and never know how." But he stopped short in the middle of a sentence, because the road he had taken led past a place where the rubbish of a stone-cutter's workshop had been thrown out, and all sorts of fragments of ornaments lay about, in great numbers especially angels' heads.

"There is an angel's head," said Botho. "Look, Frau Dörr. And here is even one with wings."

"Yes," said Frau Dörr. "And a chubby face too. But is it really an angel? I think it must be a cupid, because it is so small and has wings."

"Cupid or angel," said Botho, "they are just the same. You ask Lena, and she will tell you so. Isn't that so, Lena?"

Lena seemed offended, but he took her hand and they were good friends again.

Immediately behind the rubbish heap the path turned to the left and opened immediately afterwards into a somewhat larger country road where the willows were in bloom and were scattering their fleecy catkins over the fields, where they lay strewn about like cotton wool.

"Look, Lena," said Frau Dörr, "do you know that they

stuff beds with that now instead of feathers? And they call it tree wool."

"Yes, I know, Frau Dörr. And I am always glad when people think of anything like that and make use of it. But it would never do for you."

"No, Lena, it would not do for me. You are right. I am more in favor of something firm, horse hair and a spring bed, and if it gives a jump . . ."

"Oh, yes," said Lena, who was growing a trifle nervous over this description. "But I am afraid that we shall have rain. Just hear the frogs, Frau Dörr."

"Yes, the frogs," repeated the latter. "At night they keep up such a croaking that one cannot sleep. And why? Because this is all swamp and only looks like meadow land. Look at the pool where the stork is standing and looking right over this way. Well, he isn't looking at me. He might have to look a long time. And a mighty good thing too."

"But we ought really to be turning back," said Lena, who was much embarrassed, and simply wanted to say something.

"Oh, no indeed," laughed Frau Dörr. "Surely not now, Lena; you mustn't get frightened at a little thing like that. Good stork, you must bring me . . . Or shall I sing: Dearest stork?"

And so it went on for a while yet, for it took time to get Frau Dörr away from such a favorite topic.

But finally there was a pause, during which they walked slowly onward, until at last they came to a plateau-like ridge that led over from the Spree towards the Havel. Just at this point the pasture land ended and fields of rye and rape seed began and continued as far as the first rows of houses of Wilmersdorf.

"Now let us go up there," said Frau Dörr, "and then we will sit down and pick buttercups and make a wreath out of the stems. It is always so much fun to poke one stem into another until the wreath or the chain is done."

"Yes, yes," said Lena, whose fate it was not to be free from small embarrassments. "Yes, yes. But now come, Frau Dörr, the path leads this way."

And talking thus they climbed the little slope and seated themselves at the top on a heap of weeds and rubbish that had been lying there since the previous autumn. This heap was an excellent resting place, and also afforded a good point of view from which one could overlook a ditch bordered with willows and grass, and could not only see the northern row of houses of Wilmersdorf, but could also plainly hear, from a neighboring smoking-room and bowling-alley, the fall of the ninepins and more plainly still the rolling back of the heavy ball along the two noisy wooden rods of its track. Lena enjoyed this, and took Botho's hand and said: "See, Botho, I understand that so well (for when I was a child we lived near such a bowling-alley) that when I just hear the ball hit, I know at once how much it will make."

"Well," said Botho, "then we can bet."

"And what shall we bet?"

"We shall think of something."

"Very well. But I only have to guess right three times, and if I say nothing it doesn't count."

"I am satisfied."

And so they all three listened, and Frau Dörr, who grew more excited every minute, swore by all that was holy that her heart was throbbing and that she felt just as if she were sitting before the curtain at the theatre. "Lena, Lena, you have undertaken too much, child; it really is not possible."

And so she would have continued, if they had not just then heard a ball hit and after one dull blow come to rest against the side guard. "Missed," cried Lena. And this was actually the case.

"That was easy, too easy," said Botho. I could have guessed that myself. Let us see what happens next."

And then, two more strokes followed, without Lena speaking or moving. But Frau Dörr's eyes seemed to pop out of her head more and more. But now, Lena rose at once from her place, there came a small, hard ball and one could hear it dance, vibrating over the board with a tone in which elasticity and hardness were curiously mingled. "All nine," said Lena. And in a moment the falling of the ninepins

was heard and the attendant only confirmed what scarcely needed confirmation.

"You have won, Lena. We must eat a philopena to-day and then we'll call it square. Isn't that right, Frau Dörr?"

"Why certainly," said Frau Dörr winking. "It is all square." And so saying, she took her hat off and began to swing it about as if it had been her market hat.

Meanwhile the sun had gone down behind the Wilmersdorf church tower and Lena proposed to start for home, "it was growing so chilly; but on the way they would play tag: she was sure that Botho could not catch her."

"We shall soon see."

And now they began chasing and running, and Lena actually could not be caught until at last she was so weak with laughter and excitement that she took refuge behind the substantial form of Frau Dörr.

"Now I have a tree to dodge around," she laughed, "and so you'll never catch me." And thereupon she took hold of Frau Dörr's rather loose jacket and pushed the good woman so cleverly to the left and right, that she protected herself for quite a while. But suddenly Botho was beside her and caught her and gave her a kiss.

"That is against the rules; we had not agreed on anything." But despite this protest she hung on his arm and commanded, imitating the harsh voice of the guard, "Forward march . . . double quick," and enjoying Frau Dörr's endless exclamations of admiration wherewith the good woman accompanied the game.

"Is it believable?" said she. "No, one can hardly believe it. And always just like this. And when I think of mine! It is unbelievable, I say. And yet he was a man too. And he always behaved so!"

"What in the world is she talking about?" asked Botho softly.

"Oh she is just thinking. . . . But you know all about it. . . . I told you about it before."

"Oh, so that is it. Well, he can't have been so very bad."

"Who knows? For that matter, one is about the same as another."

"Do you think so?"

"No." And she shook her head while her eyes shone with a soft and tender expression. But she would not let this mood get the upper hand of her and so she said quickly: "Let us sing, Frau Dörr. Let us sing. But what shall we sing?"

"'Rosy dawn' . . ."

"No, not that . . . 'To-morrow in the cold grave' is too sad for me. No, let us sing 'A year from now, a year from now' or rather 'Do you remember?'"

"Yes, that is right, that is a pretty one: that is my favorite song."

And with well-practised voices all three sang Frau Dörr's favorite song, and when they had nearly reached the garden the words still rung out over the field: *"Ich denke d'ran. . . . Ich danke dir mein Leben."* And then from the other side of the road, where the long row of sheds and carriage-houses were, the echoes repeated the song.

Frau Dörr was very, very happy. But Lena and Botho had grown quiet and serious.

CHAPTER X

IT was already growing dark when they stood once more in front of Frau Nimptsch's house, and Botho, who had quickly recovered his high spirits, wanted to come in for just a moment and then bid good-bye at once. But when Lena had reminded him of all sorts of promises, and Frau Dörr with much emphasis and much use of her eyes had reminded him of the still outstanding philopena, he yielded and decided to spend the evening.

"That is right," said Frau Dörr. "And I will stay too. That is, if I may and if I shall not be in the way of the philopena. For one can never know. And I will just take my hat and cloak home and then come right back."

"Surely you must come back," said Botho, as he shook hands with her. "We shall never be so young when we meet again."

"No, no," laughed Frau Dörr. "We shall never be so young when we meet again. And it is quite impossible, of course even if we should meet again to-morrow. For a day is always a day and must amount to something. And therefore it is perfectly true that we shall never be so young when we meet again. And every one must agree to that."

In this fashion she went on for a while longer, and the wholly undisputed fact of growing older every day pleased her so much that she repeated it several times yet. And then she went out. Lena escorted her out through the hall, while Botho sat down by Frau Nimptsch and asked, as he put her shawl around her shoulders, "whether she was still angry with him for taking Lena away again for a couple of hours? But it had been so beautiful there on the mound where they had sat to rest and talk that they had quite forgotten the time."

"Yes, happy people forget the time," said the old woman. "And youth is happy, and that is right and good. But when

one grows old, dear Herr Baron, the hours grow long and one wishes the day was done and life too."

"Ah, you are only saying that, Mutterchen. Old or young, everyone loves life. Isn't that so, Lena, that we all love life?"

Lena had just come back into the room and ran to him as if struck by what he had said and threw her arms around his neck and kissed him and was far more passionate than was usual with her.

"Lena, what is the matter with you?"

But she had already regained her self-control and with a quick gesture she refused his sympathy, as if to say: "Do not ask." And while Botho was talking with Frau Nimptsch, she went to the kitchen cupboard, rummaged about there a little and came back immediately with a perfectly cheerful face, bringing a little blue book sewed up in paper, which looked like the books in which housewives write down their daily tasks. In fact the book served this purpose and also contained questions which Lena had noted down either out of curiosity or because of some deeper interest. She now opened it and pointed to the last page, on which Botho's eyes immediately fell upon the heavily underscored words: *"Things I need to know."*

"For heaven's sake, Lena, that sounds like a tract or the title of a comedy."

"It is something of the sort. Read on."

And he read: "Who were the two ladies at the Corso? Is it the elder or is it the younger? Who is Pitt? Who is Serge? Who is Gaston?"

Botho laughed. "If I should answer all those questions, Lena, I should have to stay till early to-morrow morning."

It was fortunate that Frau Dörr was not present to hear this answer or else there would have been a fresh embarrassment. But the good lady who was usually so brisk, at least where the Baron was concerned, had not yet returned, and so Lena said: "Very well, then, have it your own way. And for all I care, the two ladies may wait until another time! But what do the foreign names mean? I asked you before, the time you brought the bonbons. But

you gave me no real answer, only half an answer. Is it a secret?"

"No."

"Then tell me about it."

"Gladly, Lena, these names are only nicknames."

"I know that. You said so before."

"So they are names that we have given each other for convenience, with or without reason, just by chance."

"And what does Pitt mean?"

"Pitt was an English statesman."

"And is your friend a statesman too?"

"For heaven's sake . . ."

"And Serge?"

"That is a Russian given name, belonging to a Russian saint and many Russian crown princes."

"Who, however, do not find it necessary to be saints if I am right? . . . And Gaston?"

"Is a French name."

"Yes, I remember that. Once when I was a little young thing, before I was confirmed, I saw a piece: 'The Man with the Iron Mask.' And the man with the mask was called Gaston. And I cried dreadfully."

"And now you will laugh if I tell you that I am Gaston."

"No, I will not laugh. You have a mask too."

Botho was about to contradict this, both in earnest and in jest, but Frau Dörr, who just then came in, broke off the conversation, by excusing herself for having kept them waiting so long. But an order had come in and she had been obliged to make a burial wreath in a hurry.

"A big one or a little one?" asked Frau Nimptsch, who loved to talk about funerals and had a passion for hearing all the details about them.

"Well," said Frau Dörr, "it was a middle-sized one; plain people. Ivy and azaleas."

"Oh, Lord!" went on Frau Nimptsch, "every one is wild about ivy and azaleas, but I am not. Ivy is well enough when it grows on the grave and covers it all so green and thick that the grave seems as peaceful as he who lies below. But ivy in a wreath, that is not right. In my day we used immortelles, yellow or half yellow, and if we wanted some-

thing very fine we took red ones or white ones and made a wreath out of those, or even just one color and hung it on the cross, and there it hung all winter, and when spring came there it hung still. And some lasted longer than that. But this ivy and azalea is no good at all. And why not? because it does not last long. And I always think that the longer the wreath hangs on the grave, the longer people remember him who lies below. And a widow too, if she is not too young. And that is why I favor immortelles, yellow or red or even white, and any one can hang up another wreath also if he wants to. That is just for the looks of it. But the immortelle is the real thing."

"Mother," said Lena, "you talk so much about graves and wreaths lately."

"Yes, child, everyone speaks as he thinks. And if one is thinking of a wedding, he talks about weddings, and if he is thinking of a funeral, then he talks about graves. And, anyway, I didn't begin talking about graves and wreaths; Frau Dörr began it, which was quite right. And I only keep on talking about it because I am always anxious and I keep thinking. Who will bring you one?"

"Now, mother . . . ."

"Yes, Lena, you are good, you are a dear child. But man proposes and God disposes, and to-day red, to-morrow dead. And you might die any day as well as I; for all that, I do not believe you will. And Frau Dörr may die, or when I die she may live somewhere else, or I may be living somewhere else and may have just moved in. Ah, my dear Lena, one can never be sure of anything, not even of a wreath for one's grave."

"Oh, but you can, Mother Nimptsch," said Botho, "you shall certainly have one."

"Oh, Herr Baron, if that is only true."

"And if I am in Petersburg or Paris, and I hear that my old friend Frau Nimptsch is dead, I will send a wreath, and if I am in Berlin or anywhere near, I will bring it myself."

The aged woman's face brightened for joy. "There, now you have said something, Herr Baron. And now I shall have a wreath for my grave and it is dear to me that I

shall have it. For I cannot endure bare graves, that look like a burial ground for orphans or prisoners or worse. But now make the tea, Lena, the water is boiling already, and we have strawberries and milk. And sour too. Heavens, the Herr Baron must be quite starved. Looking and looking makes folks hungry, I can remember so much yet. Yes, Frau Dörr, we had our youth, even if it was long ago. But men were the same then as they are to-day."

Frau Nimptsch, who happened to be talkative this evening, philosophised for a while longer, while Lena was bringing in the supper and Botho continued to amuse himself by teasing Frau Dörr. It was a good thing that she had put away her handsome hat, which was suitable for Kroll or for the theatre, but not for the mound near Wilmersdorf. Where did she get the hat? No princess had such a hat. And he had never seen anything so becoming; he would not speak for himself alone, but a prince might have fallen in love with it."

The good woman did indeed realize that he was joking. But still she said: "Yes, indeed, when Dörr once gets started, he is so eager and so fastidious that I can hardly tell what has come over him. Day by day he is quite dull, but all of a sudden he is as if he had changed into another man and then I always say to myself: there must be something the matter with him and this is the only way he knows how to show it."

And so the talk went on over the tea, until ten o'clock. Then Botho rose to go and Lena and Frau Dörr accompanied him through the front garden to the gate. While they were standing there Frau Dörr reminded them that after all they had forgotten the philopena. Both seemed desirous to disregard this reminder and repeated once more how delightful the afternoon had been. "We must make such little excursions oftener, Lena, and when I come again, we will think where to go. I shall be sure to think of something, some place where it is quiet and beautiful, and further away, and not just across the fields."

"And we will take Frau Dörr with us again," said Lena. "You ask her, will you not, Botho?"

"Certainly, Lena. Frau Dörr must always go with us. Without her the trip would be a failure."

"Ah, Herr Baron, I could never accept that, I could never expect such a thing."

"Oh, yes indeed, dear Frau Dörr," laughed Botho. "You may expect everything, such a woman as you."

And therewith they parted.

CHAPTER XI

THE country excursion, which had been promised or at least discussed after the walk to Wilmersdorf, was now the favorite topic for several weeks, and whenever Botho came the question was, where to go? All possible places were mentioned: Erkner and Kranichberg, Schwilow and Baumgartenbrück, but all were too much frequented, and so it happened that at last Botho spoke of Hankel's Ablage, the beauty and solitude of which he had heard enthusiastically described. Lena agreed, for all she wanted was to get out into God's green world, as far as possible from the city and its doings, and to be with her lover. It really did not matter where.

The next Friday was decided upon for the excursion. "Agreed." And so they started by the Görlitz afternoon train for Hankel's Ablage, where they had engaged quarters for the night and meant to pass the next day very quietly.

There were very few coaches on the train, but even these were not very full, and so it happened that Botho and Lena found themselves alone. In the next coupé there was a good deal of talk, from which it was plainly to be heard that these were through passengers and not people meaning to stop over at Hankel's Ablage.

Lena was happy, and gave her hand to Botho and gazed silently at the landscape with its woods and meadows. At last she said: "But what will Frau Dörr say about our leaving her at home?"

"She needn't find it out."

"Mother will be sure to tell her."

"Why, that is rather bad and yet we could not do any differently. Look here! It was well enough out in the fields the other day, because we were quite alone. But if we do find ourselves practically alone at Hankel's Ablage, yet we shall have a host and a hostess and perhaps a waiter from Berlin. And a waiter laughing quietly to himself or

at least laughing inwardly, I cannot endure: he would spoil all my pleasure. Frau Dörr, when she is sitting by your mother or teaching the proprieties to old Dörr, is great fun, but not in public. Amongst people she is simply a comical figure and an embarrassment to us."

Towards five the train stopped at the edge of a wood. . . . Actually no one but Botho and Lena got out, and the two walked leisurely and with frequent pauses to a tavern, which stood close to the Spree and about ten minutes' walk from the little station. This "Establishment," as it was described on a slanting signboard, had been originally a mere fisherman's cottage, which had very gradually, and more by addition than by rebuilding, been changed into a tavern. The view across the stream made up for all other deficiencies, so that the brilliant reputation which the place enjoyed among the initiated never for a moment seemed exaggerated. Lena, too, felt quite at home immediately, and went and sat in a sort of veranda-like room that had been built on, and that was half covered over by the branches of an old elm that stood between the house and the bank.

"Let us stay here," said she. "Just see the boats, two, three . . . and further out a whole fleet is coming. Yes, it was indeed a lucky thought that brought us here. Only see how they run back and forth on the boats and put their weight on the rudder. And yet it is all so silent. Oh, my own dear Botho, how beautiful it is and how I love you!"

Botho rejoiced to see Lena so happy. Something determined and almost severe that had always formed a part of her character seemed to have disappeared and to have been replaced by a new gentleness, and this change seemed to make her perfectly happy. Presently mine host who had inherited the "Establishment" from his father and grandfather, came to take the orders of the "gentle folk," and especially to ascertain whether they intended to stay overnight, and when this question was answered in the affirmative, he begged them to decide upon their room. There were several at their disposal, but the gable room would probably suit them the best. It was, indeed, low studded, but was

large and roomy and had the view across the Spree as far as the Müggelborg.

When his proposal had been accepted, the host went to attend to the necessary preparations, and Botho and Lena were left once more to enjoy to the full the happiness of being quietly alone together. A finch whose nest was in a low bush near by was swinging on a drooping twig of the elm, the swallows were darting here and there, and finally came a black hen followed by a whole brood of ducklings, passed the veranda, and strutted pompously out on a little wooden pier that was built far out over the water. But half way along this pier the hen stopped, while the ducklings plunged into the water and swam away.

Lena watched all this eagerly. "Just look, Botho, how the stream rushes through among the posts." But actually it was neither the pier nor the water flowing through, that attracted her attention, but the two boats that were moored there. She coquetted with the idea and indulged in various trifling questions and references, and only when Botho remained deaf to all this did she express herself more plainly and declare that she wanted to go boating.

"Women are incorrigible. Incorrigible in their light-mindedness. Think of that Easter Monday! Just a hair's breadth . . ."

"And I should have been drowned. Certainly. But that is only one side of the matter. There followed the aquaintance with a handsome man, you may be able to guess whom I mean. His name is Botho. I am sure you will not think of Easter Monday as an unlucky day? I am more amiable and more gallant than you."

"There, there. . . . But can you row, Lena?"

"Of course I can. And I can steer and raise a sail too. Because I was near being drowned, you think I don't know anything? But it was the boy's fault, and for that matter, any one might be drowned."

And then they walked down the pier to the two boats, whose sails were reefed, while their pennants with their names embroidered on them fluttered from the masthead.

"Which shall we take," said Botho, "the *Trout* or the *Hope?*"

"Naturally, the *Trout*—What have we to do with *Hope*?"

Botho understood well enough that Lena said that on purpose to tease him, for in spite of her delicacy of feeling, still as a true child of Berlin she took pleasure in witty little speeches. He excused this little fling, however, and helped her into the boat. Then he sprang in too. Just as he was about to cast off the host came down the pier bringing a jacket and a plaid, because it would grow cold as the sun went down. They thanked him and soon were in the middle of the stream, which was here scarcely three hundred paces wide, as it flowed among the islands and tongues of land. Lena used her oars only now and then, but even these few strokes sufficed to bring them very soon to a field overgrown with tall grass which served as a boatbuilder's yard, where at some little distance from them a new boat was being built and various old leaky ones were being caulked and repaired.

"We must go and see the boats," said Lena gaily, taking Botho's hand and urging him along, but before they could reach the boat builder's yard the sound of hammer and axe ceased and the bells began to ring, announcing the close of the day's work. So they turned aside, perhaps a hundred paces from the dockyard into a path which led diagonally across a field, to a pine wood. The reddish trunks of the trees glowed wonderfully in the light of the sinking sun, while their tops seemed floating in a bluish mist.

"I wish I could pick you a pretty bunch of flowers," said Botho, taking Lena's hand. "But look, there is just the grassy field, all grass and no flowers. Not one."

"But there are plenty. Only you do not see them, because you are too exacting."

"And even if I were, it is only for your sake."

"Now, no excuses. You shall see that I can find some."

And stooping down, she searched right and left saying: "Only look, here . . . and there . . . and here again. There are more here than in Dörr's garden; only you must have an eye for them." And she plucked the flowers diligently, stooping for them and picking weeds and grass with them, until in a very short time she had a quantity both of attractive blossoms and of useless weeds in her hands.

Meanwhile they had come to an old empty fisherman's hut, in front of which lay an upturned boat on a strip of sand strewn with pine cones from the neighboring wood.

"This is just right for us," said Botho: "we will sit down here. You must be tired. And now let me see what you have gathered. I don't believe you know yourself, and I shall have to play the botanist. Give them here. This is ranunculus, or buttercup, and this is mouse's ear. Some call it false forget-me-not. False, do you hear? And this one with the notched leaf is taraxacum, our good old dandelion, which the French use for salad. Well, I don't mind. But there is a distinction between a salad and a bouquet."

"Just give them back," laughed Lena. "You have no eye for such things, because you do not love them, and the eyes and love always belong together. First you said there were no flowers in the field, and now, when we find them, you will not admit that they are really flowers. But they are flowers, and pretty ones too. What will you bet that I can make you something pretty out of them."

"I am really curious to see what you will choose."

"Only those that you agree to. And now let us begin. Here is a forget-me-not, but no mouse's ear—forget-me-not, but a real one. Do you agree?"

"Yes."

"And this is speedwell, the prize of honor, a dainty little blossom. That is surely good enough for you. I do not even need to ask. And this big reddish brown one is the devil's paintbrush, and must have grown on purpose for you. Oh yes, laugh at it. And these," and she stooped to pick a couple of yellow blossoms, that were growing in the sand at her feet, "these are immortelles."

"Immortelles," said Botho. "They are old Frau Nimptsch's passion. Of course we must take those, we need them. And now we must tie up our little bouquet."

"Very well. But what shall we tie it with? We will wait till we find a strong grass blade."

"No, I will not wait so long. And a grass blade is not good enough for me, it is too thick and coarse. I want something fine. I know what, Lena, you have such beautiful long hair; pull out one and tie the bouquet with that."

"No," said she decidedly.

"No? And why not? Why not?"

"Because the proverb says 'hair binds.' And if I bind the flowers with it you too will be bound.'"

"But that is superstition. Frau Dorr says so."

"No, the good old soul told me herself. And whatever she has told me from my youth up, even if it seemed like superstition, I have always found it correct."

"Well, have it so. I will not contradict you. But I will not have the flowers tied with anything else but a strand of your hair. And you will not be so obstinate as to refuse me."

She looked at him, pulled a long hair from her head and wound it around the bunch of flowers. Then she said: "You chose it. Here, take it. Now you are bound."

He tried to laugh, but the seriousness with which Lena had been speaking, and especially the earnestness with which she had pronounced the last words, did not fail to leave an impression on his mind.

"It is growing cool," said he after a while. The host was right to bring you a jacket and a plaid. Come, let us start."

And so they went back to the boat, and made haste to cross the stream.

Only now, as they were returning, and coming nearer and nearer, did they see how picturesquely the tavern was situated. The thatched roof sat like a grotesque high cap above the timbered building, whose four little front windows were just being lit for the evening. And at the same time a couple of lanterns were carried out to the veranda, and their weird-looking bands of light shone out across the water through the branches of the old elm, which in the darkness resembled some fantastically wrought grating.

Neither spoke. But the happiness of each seemed to depend upon the question how long their happiness was to last.

CHAPTER XII

IT was already growing dark as they landed.

"Let us take this table," said Botho, as they stepped on to the veranda again: "You will feel no draught here and I will order you some grog or a hot claret cup, shall I not? I see you are chilly."

He offered several other things, but Lena begged to be allowed to go up to her room, and said that by and by when he came up she would be perfectly well again. She only felt a trifle poorly and did not need anything and if she could only rest a little, it would pass off.

Therewith she excused herself and went up to the gable room which had been prepared in the meantime. The hostess, who was indulging in all sorts of mistaken conjectures, accompanied her, and immediately asked with much curiosity, "What really was the matter," and without waiting for an answer, she went right on: yes, it was always so with young women, she remembered that herself, and before her eldest was born (she now had four and would have had five, but the middle one had come too soon and did not live), she had had just such a time. It just rushed over one so, and one felt ready to die. But a cup of balm tea, that is to say, the genuine monastery balm, would give a quick relief and one would feel like a fish in the water and quite set up and merry and affectionate too. "Yes, yes, gracious lady, when one has four, without counting the little angel . . ."

Lena had some difficulty in concealing her embarrassment and asked, for the sake of saying something, for a cup of the monastery balm tea, of which she had already heard.

While this conversation was going on up in the gable room, Botho had taken a seat, not in the sheltered veranda, but at a primitive wooden table that was nailed on four posts in front of the veranda and afforded a fine view. He planned

to take his evening meal here. He ordered fish, and as the "tench and dill" for which the tavern was famous was brought, the host came to ask what kind of wine the Herr Baron desired? (He gave him this title by mere chance.)

"I think," said Botho, "Brauneberger, or let us say rather Rudesheimer would suit the delicate fish best, and to show that the wine is good you must sit down with me as my guest and drink some of your own wine."

The host bowed smilingly and soon came back with a dusty bottle, while the maid, a pretty Wendin in a woolen gown and a black head-kerchief, brought the glasses on a tray.

"Now let us see," said Botho. "The bottle promises all sorts of good qualities. Too much dust and cobweb is always suspicious, but this . . . Ah, superb! This is the vintage of '70, is it not? And now we must drink, but to what? To the prosperity of Hankel Ablage."

The host was evidently delighted, and Botho, who saw what a good impression he was making, went on speaking in his own gentle and friendly way: "I find it charming here, and there is only one thing to be said against Hankel's Ablage: its name."

"Yes," agreed the host, "the name might be better and it is really unfortunate for us. And yet there is a reason for the name, Hankel's Ablage really was an Ablage, and so it is still called."

"Very good. But this brings us no further forward than before. Why is it called an Ablage? And what is an Ablage?"

"Well, it is as much as to say a place for loading and unloading. The whole stretch of land hereabouts (and he pointed backward) was, in fact, always one great domain, and was called under Old Fritz and even earlier under the warrior kings the domain Wusterhausen. And the thirty villages as well as the forest and moorland all belonged to it. Now you see the thirty villages naturally had to obtain and use many things, or what amounts to the same thing, they had to have egress and ingress, and for both they needed from the beginning a harbor or a place to buy and sell, and

the only doubt would have been what place they should choose for the purpose. They actually chose this place; this bay became a harbor, a mart, an "Ablage" for all that came and went, and since the fisher who lived here at that time was my grandfather Hankel, the place became "Hankel's Ablage."

"It is a pity," said Botho, "that this cannot be so well and clearly explained to everyone," and the host who felt encouraged by the interest shown was about to continue. But before he could begin, the cry of a bird was heard high in the air, and as Botho looked up curiously, he saw that two large, powerful birds, scarcely recognizable in the twilight, were flying above the water.

"Were those wild geese?"

"No, herons. The whole forest hereabouts is full of them. For that matter, it is a regular hunting ground. There are huge numbers of wild boar and deer and woodcock, and among the reeds and rushes here ducks, and snipe."

"Delightful," said Botho, in whom the hunter was waking up. "Do you know I envy you. After all, what is in a name? Ducks, snipe, woodcocks! One could almost wish to be in such pleasant circumstances also. Only it must be lonely here, too lonely."

The host smiled to himself and Botho, who noticed this, became curious and said: "You laugh. But is it not so? For half an hour I have heard nothing but the water gurgling under the pier, and just now the call of the herons. I call that lonely, however beautiful it may be. And now and then a couple of big sailboats glide by, but they are all alike, or at least they look very similar. And really each one seems to be a phantom ship. It is as still as death."

"Certainly," said the host. "But that is only as long as it lasts."

"How so?"

"Yes," repeated the host, "as long as it lasts. You speak of solitude, Herr Baron, and for days together it is truly lonely here. And it might be so for weeks. But scarcely has the ice broken up and the spring come when we have guests and the Berliner has arrived."

"When does he come?"

"Incredibly early. All in a moment there they are. See here, Herr Baron, while I, who am hardened to the weather, am still staying indoors because the east wind blows and the March sun scorches, the Berliner already sits out of doors, lays his summer overcoat on the chair and orders pale ale. For if only the sun shines the Berliner speaks of beautiful weather. It is all the same to him if there is inflammation of the lungs or diphtheria in every wind that blows. It is then that he best likes to play grace-hoops, and some are also fond of Boccia, and when they leave, quite blistered from the reflected sunlight, my heart really aches for them, for there is not one among them whose skin will not peel off at least by the following day."

Botho laughed. "Yes, indeed, the Berliners! And that reminds me, your Spree hereabouts must be the place where the oarsmen and yachtsmen meet to hold their regattas."

"Certainly," said the host. "But that is not saying very much. "If there are a good many, there may be fifty or perhaps a hundred. And then all is still again, and the water sports are over for weeks and months. No, club members are comfortable to deal with; by comparison they are endurable. But in June when the steamers come, it is bad. And then it will continue all summer, or at any rate a long, long time . . ."

"I believe you," said Botho.

"Then a telegram comes every evening. 'Early to-morrow morning at nine o'clock we shall arrive by the steamer *Alse*. Party to spend the day. 240 persons.' And then follow the names of those who have gotten up the affair. It does well enough for once. But the trouble is, it lasts so long. For how do such parties spend their time? They are out in the woods and fields until it is growing dark, and then comes their dinner, and then they dance till eleven. Now you will say, 'That is nothing much,' and it would not be anything much if the following day were a holiday. But the second day is like the first, and the third is like the second. Every evening at about eleven a steamer leaves with two hundred and forty persons and every morning at at nine a steamer arrives with just as many on board. And

between whiles everything must be cleared away and tidied up. And so the night passes in airing, polishing and scrubbing, and when the last corner is clean the next boat load is already arriving. Naturally, everything has its good side, and when one counts up his receipts towards midnight one knows what he has been toiling for. "From nothing you get nothing," says the proverb and it is quite true, and if I were to fill all the punch bowls that have been drunk here I should have to get a Heidelberg tun. It brings something in, certainly, and is quite right and proper. But according as one moves forward he also moves backward and pays with the best that he has, with his life and health. For what is life without sleep?"

"True, I already see," said Botho, "no happiness is complete. But then comes winter, and then you can sleep like the seven sleepers."

"Yes, if it does not happen to be New Year's or Twelfth Night or Carnival. And these holidays come oftener than the calendar shows. You ought to see the life here when they arrive in sleighs or on skates from all the ten villages, and gather in the great hall that I have built on. Then we don't see one citified face among them, and the Berliners leave us in peace, but the farm hands and chambermaids have their day. Then we see otter skin caps and corduroy jackets with silver buttons, and all kinds of soldiers who are on leave are there also: Schwedter Dragoons and Fürstenwald Uhlans, or perhaps Potsdam Hussars. And everyone is jealous and quarrelsome, and one cannot tell which they like best, dancing or fighting, and on the slightest pretext the villages are arrayed against each other in battle. And so with noise and turbulent sports they pass the whole long night and whole mountains of pancakes disappear, and only at dawn do they leave for home over the frozen river or over the snow."

"Now I see plainly," said Botho, "that you have not very much solitude or deathly stillness. But it is fortunate that I knew nothing about all this, or else I should not have wished to come and should have missed a real pleasure. And I should have been really sorry not to have seen such a beautiful spot. . . . But as you said before; what is life without

sleep? and I feel that you are right. I am tired, although it is still early; I think it must be the effect of the air and the water. And then I must go and see . . . Your good wife has taken so much trouble . . . Good night, I have talked quite enough."

And thereupon he rose and went into the house, which had now grown very quiet.

Lena had lain down on the bed with her feet on a chair at the bedside and had drunk a cup of the tea that the hostess had brought her. The rest and the warmth did her good, the little attack passed off, and some little time ago she could have gone down to the veranda to join in the conversation of Botho and the landlord. But she was not in a talkative mood, and so she only got up to look around the room, in which she had thus far taken no interest.

And the room was well worth her attention. The timbers and the plastered walls had been allowed to remain since former times, and the whitewashed ceiling was so low that one could reach it with one's hand. But whatever could be improved had been improved. Instead of the small panes which one still saw on the ground floor, a large window reaching nearly down to the floor had been set in, which afforded, as the host had said, a beautiful view of the scenery, both woods and water. But the large window was not all that had been accomplished here in the way of modern comfort. A few good pictures, very likely bought at some auction, hung on the old irregular plastered walls, and where the projecting window gable joined the sloping roof of the room itself stood a pair of handsome toilet tables facing each other. Everything showed ~~that the character of the~~ fisherman's ~~and boatman's~~ tavern had been carefully kept, while at the same time the place had been turned into a pleasing hotel for the rich sportsmen of the yacht club.

Lena was much pleased with all that she saw, and began to examine the pictures that hung in broad frames to the right and left of the bed. They were engravings, the subjects of which interested her keenly, and so she wanted to read the inscriptions under each. One was inscribed "Washington Crossing the Delaware" and the other "The

Last Hour at Trafalgar." But she could get no further than merely to decipher the syllables, and although it was a very small matter, it gave her a pang, because it emphasised the chasm that divided her from Botho. He was indeed, in the habit of making fun of learning and education, but she was clever enough to know what to think of such jesting.

Close to the entrance door, above a rococo table, on which stood some red glasses and a water carafe, hung a gay colored lithograph with an inscription in three languages: "*Si jeunesse savait*"—a picture which Lena remembered having seen at the Dörrs'. Dörr loved such things. When she saw it here again, she shivered and felt distressed. Her fine sensibility was hurt by the sensual quality of the picture as if it were a distortion of her own feeling, and so, in order to shake off the impression, she went to the window and opened both sashes to let in the night air. Oh, how refreshing it was! She seated herself on the window-sill, which was only a couple of hands' breadth from the floor, threw her left arm around the middle bar and listened to hear what was happening on the veranda. But she heard nothing. Deep stillness reigned, except that in the old elm there was a stirring and rustling, and any discomfort that might have lingered in her mind disappeared at once, as she gazed with ever-growing delight on the picture spread out before her. The water flowed gently, wood and meadow lay in the dim evening light, and the thin crescent of the new moon cast its light on the stream and showed the tremulous motion of the rippling waves.

"How beautiful," said Lena, drawing a deep breath. "And I am so happy," she added.

She could hardly bear to leave the view. But at last she rose, placed a chair before the glass and began to let down her beautiful hair and braid it. While she was thus occupied Botho came in.

"Lena, still up! I thought that I should have to wake you with a kiss."

"You are too early for that, however late you come."

And she rose and went to him. "My dearest Botho. How long you stayed away . . ."

"And your fever? And your little attack?"

"It has passed off and I have felt well again for the last half hour. And I have been waiting for you all that time." And she led him over to the open window: "Only look. Would not the beauty of that view fill any poor human heart with longing?"

And she clung to him and just as she was closing her eyes, she looked up at him with an expression of rapture.

CHAPTER XIII

BOTH were up early and the sun was still struggling with the morning mist as they came down stairs to take breakfast. A light early breeze was blowing, which the boatmen did not want to lose, and so, as our young couple were stepping out of doors, a whole flotilla of sailboats glided past on the Spree.

Lena was still in her morning dress. She took Botho's arm and wandered along the bank with him to a place where the reeds and rushes grew tall. He looked at her tenderly. "Lena, I have never seen you look as you do to-day. I hardly know how to express it. I cannot find any other word; you look so happy."

And that was true. Yes, she was happy, perfectly happy; and saw the world in a rosy light. She was leaning on her lover's arm and the hour was very precious to her. Was not that enough? And if this hour was the last, then let it be the last. Was it not a privilege to pass such a day, even if it were only once?

Thus all thoughts of care and sorrow vanished, which in spite of herself had oppressed her spirit, and she felt nothing but pride and joy and thankfulness. But she said nothing, for she was superstitious and did not dare to talk about her happiness, and it was only through a slight tremor of her arm that Botho knew that his words "I believe you are happy, Lena" had found their way to her innermost heart.

The host came and inquired courteously, ~~though with~~ some slight embarrassment, ~~whether they had slept well~~.

"Admirably," said Botho. "The herb tea, which your good wife recommended, did wonders and the crescent moon shone right in at our window, and the nightingales sang softly, so softly that we could barely hear them. Who would not sleep as if in paradise? I hope that no steamer with two hundred and forty guests has been announced for

this afternoon. That indeed would drive us forth from paradise. You smile and are probably thinking, 'Who can tell?' and perhaps my own words have conjured up the devil, but he is not here yet. I see neither smokestack nor smoke, the Spree is still undisturbed, and even if all Berlin is on the way our breakfast at least we can enjoy in peace. Can we not? But where?"

"Wherever you order it."

"Very well, then I think under the elm. The fine dining-room is only necessary when the sun is too hot out of doors. And it is not too hot yet and has not wholly burned away the mist above the woods."

The host went to order the breakfast, but the young couple walked as far as a little promontory on their side of the stream, from which they could see the red roofs of a neighboring village and close to the village the sharp church steeple of Königs-Wusterhausen. By the water's edge lay the trunk of a willow that had drifted down stream and lodged there. They sat down on this log and watched a fisherman and his wife who were cutting the tall reeds and throwing great bundles of them into their skiff. They enjoyed the pretty sight, and when they arrived at the tavern again, their breakfast was just being served. The breakfast was in the English style rather than the German: coffee and tea, with eggs and meat and even slices of toast in a silver rack.

"Just look, Lena. We must take breakfast here often. What do you think? It is heavenly. And look over towards the dockyard; they are already at work caulking the boats and the work follows a regular rhythm. Really, the rhythm of any such work is the best kind of music."

Lena nodded, but she was only half listening, for again to-day her attention was attracted toward the pier. It was not, indeed, the boats that were moored there, and which had so aroused her interest yesterday, but a pretty maid, who was kneeling half way down the pier amongst her kettles and copperware. With a hearty pleasure in her work, which was expressed in every motion of her arms, she polished the cans, kettles, and saucepans, and whenever she had finished one, she let the water run over the highly polished

vessel. Then she would hold it up, let it glisten a moment in the sun and then put it in a basket.

Lena was quite carried away by the picture, and pointed to the pretty girl, who seemed to love her work as if she could never do enough.

"Do you know, Botho, it is no mere chance that she is kneeling there. She is kneeling there for me and I feel plainly, that it is a sign and a token."

"But what is the matter with you, Lena? You look so different, you have grown quite pale all of a sudden."

"Oh nothing."

"Nothing? And yet your eyes are glistening as if you were nearer to tears than to laughter. You certainly must have seen copper kettles before and a cook polishing them. It seems almost as if you envied the girl kneeling there and working hard enough for three women."

The appearance of the host interrupted the conversation at this point and Lena recovered her quiet bearing and soon her cheerfulness also. Then she went upstairs to change her dress.

When she returned she found that a programme proposed by the host had been unconditionally accepted by Botho: the young people were to take a sailboat as far as the next village, Nieder Löhme, which was charmingly situated on the Wendisch Spree. From this village they were to walk as far as Königs-Wusterhausen, visit the park and the castle, and then return in the same way. This excursion would take half a day. The manner of passing the afternoon could be arranged later.

Lena was pleased with the plan and a couple of wraps were just being put in the boat, which had been hastily gotten ready, when voices and hearty laughter were heard from the garden—a sound which seemed to indicate visitors and the probability that their solitude would be disturbed.

"Ah, members of the yacht and rowing club," said Botho. "The Lord be praised, we shall escape them, Lena. Let us hurry."

And they both started off to reach the boat as quickly as possible. But before they could reach the pier they saw that

they were already surrounded and caught. The guests were not only Botho's comrades, but his most intimate friends, Pitt, Serge, and Balafré. All three had ladies with them.

"Ah, les beaux esprits se rencontrent," said Balafré in a rather wild mood, which quickly changed to a more conventional manner, as he observed that he was being watched by the host and hostess from the threshold. "How fortunate we are to meet here. Allow me, Gaston, to present our ladies to you: Queen Isabeau, Fräulein Johanna, Fräulein Margot."

Botho saw what sort of names were the order of the day, and adapting himself quickly, he replied, indicating Lena with a little gesture and introducing her: Mademoiselle Agnes Sorel."

All the three men bowed civilly, even to all appearances respectfully, while the two daughters of Thibaut d'Arc made a very slight curtsey, and Queen Isabeau, who was at least fifteen years older, offered a more friendly greeting to Agnes Sorel, who was not only a stranger to her, but apparently embarrassed.

The whole affair was a disturbance, perhaps even an intentional disturbance, but the more successfully the plan worked out, the more needful did it seem to keep a bold front at a losing game. And in this Botho was entirely successful. He asked one question after another, and thus found out that the little group had taken one of the small steamers very early and had left the boat at Schmöckwitz, and from there had come to Zeuthen on a sailboat. From Zeuthen they had walked, since it took scarcely twenty minutes; it had been charming: old trees, green fields and red roofs.

While the entire group of new-comers, but especially Queen Isabeau, who was almost more distinguished for her talkativeness than for her stout figure, were narrating these things, they had by chance strolled up to the veranda, where they sat down at one of the long tables.

"Charming," said Serge. "Large, free and open and yet so secluded. And the meadow over there seems just made for a moonlight promenade."

"Yes," added Balafré, "a moonlight promenade. That is all very fine. But it is now barely ten o'clock, and before we can have a moonlight promenade we have about twelve hours to dispose of. I propose a boating trip."

"No," said Isabeau, "a boating trip will not do; we have already had more than enough of that to-day. First the steamer and then the sailboat and now another boat, would be too much. I am against it. Besides I never can see the good of all this paddling: we might just as well fish or catch some little creatures with our hands and amuse ourselves with the poor little beasts. No, there will be no more paddling to-day. I must earnestly beg you."

The men, to whom these words were addressed, were evidently amused at the desires of the Queen Mother, and immediately made other proposals, which, however, met with the same fate. Isabeau rejected everything; and at last, when the others, half in jest and half in earnest, began to disapprove of her conduct, she merely begged to be left in peace. "Gentlemen," said she, "Patience. I beg you to give me a chance to speak for at least a moment." This request was followed by ironical applause, for she had done all the talking thus far. But she went on quite unconcernedly: "Gentlemen, I beg you, teach me to understand men. What is an excursion into the country? It is taking breakfast and playing cards. Isn't that so?"

"Isabeau is always right," laughed Balafré giving her a slap on the shoulder. "We will play cards. This is a capital place for it; I almost think that everyone must win here. And the ladies can go to walk in the meantime or perhaps take a forenoon nap. That will do them the most good, and an hour and a half will be time enough. And at twelve o'clock we will meet again. And the menu shall be according to the judgment of our Queen. Yes, Queen, life is still sweet. To be sure that is from 'Don Carlos.' But must everything be quoted from the 'Maid of Orleans'?"

That shot struck home and the two younger girls giggled, although they had scarcely understood the innuendo. But Isabeau who had grown up amongst conversations that were always interspersed with such slightly hinted sarcasms, remained perfectly calm and said, turning to the three other

women: "Ladies, if I may beg you, we are now abandoned and have two hours to ourselves. For that matter, things might be worse."

Thereupon they rose and went into the house, where the Queen went to the kitchen, and after greeting those present in a friendly but superior manner, she asked for the host. The latter was not in the house, so the young woman offered to go and call him in from the garden, but Isabeau would not hear of it. She would go herself, and she actually went, still followed by her cortège of three (Balafré called them the hen and chickens). She went into the garden, where she found the host arranging the new asparagus beds. Close by there was an old-fashioned greenhouse, very low in front, with big, sloping windows, and a somewhat broken-down wall on which Lena and the daughters of Thibaut d'Arc sat, while Isabeau was arranging her business.

"We have come," said she, "to speak with you about the luncheon. What can we have?"

"Everything you are pleased to order."

"Everything? That is a great deal, almost too much. Now I should like eels. Only not like this, but like this." And as she spoke she pointed first to a ring on her finger and then to her broad thick bracelet.

"I am very sorry, ladies," answered the host. "We have no eels. Nor any kind of fish; I cannot serve you with fish, it is an exception. Yesterday we had tench and dill, but it came from Berlin. If I want a fish, I have to go to the Cologne fish market for it."

"What a pity! We could have brought one with us. But what have you then?"

"A saddle of venison."

"H'm, that sounds rather well. And before that some vegetables for a salad. It is too late or almost too late for asparagus. But I see you still have some young beans there. And here in the hot bed there is surely something to be found, a couple of small cucumbers or some lettuce. And then a sweet dish. Something with whipped cream. I do not care so much for it myself, but men, who always

behave as if they did not like such things, are always wanting sweets. This will make three or four courses, I think. And then bread and butter and cheese."

"And at what time do you wish the luncheon?"

"Well, I think quite soon, or at least as soon as possible. Is that right? We are hungry and half an hour is long enough to roast the saddle of venison. So let us say at about twelve. And if I may ask, we will have punch, a bottle of Rhine wine, three of Moselle and three of Champagne. But good brands. You must not think that it will be wasted. I am familiar with wines, and can tell by the taste whether it is Moët or Mumm. But you will come out all right; you inspire me with confidence. By the way, can we not go from your garden directly into the wood? I hate every unnecessary step. And perhaps we may find some mushrooms. That would be heavenly. They would go well with the saddle of venison; mushrooms never spoil anything." The host not only answered the question in the affirmative, but escorted the ladies as far as the garden gate, from which it was only a couple of steps to the edge of the wood. Only a public road ran between. As soon as one had crossed the road, one was in the shady woods, and Isabeau, who suffered greatly from the increasing heat, thought herself fortunate in having avoided the rather long detour over a strip of treeless grass land. She played the fine lady, but her parasol, which she hung to her girdle, was decorated with a big grease spot. She took Lena's arm, while the two ladies followed. Isabeau appeared to be in the best humor and said, glancing back, to Margot and Johanna: "We must have a goal. It is quite dreadful to see only woods and then more woods. What do you think, Johanna?"

Johanna was the taller of the two d'Arcs, and was very pretty, but somewhat pale and dressed with studied simplicity. Serge liked that. Her gloves fitted wonderfully, and one might have taken her for a lady if she had not used her teeth to button one of her glove buttons which had sprung out.

"What do you think, Johanna?" the Queen repeated her question.

"Well, then, I propose that we should go back to the village from which we came. It was called Zeuthen, and looked so romantic and so melancholy, and the road between there and here was so beautiful. And it must be just as beautiful or more so going back in the other direction. And on the right hand, that is to say, on the left going from here, was a churchyard with crosses. And there was a very large marble one."

"Yes, dear Johanna, that is all very well, but what good would it do us? We have seen the whole road. Or do you want to see the churchyard. . . ."

"Of course I do. I have my own feelings, especially on a day like this. And it is always good to be reminded that one must die. And when the elder bushes are in bloom . . ."

"But, Johanna, the elders are no longer in bloom; the acacia is about all, and that already has pods. My goodness, if you are so wild about churchyards, you can see the one in the Oranienstrasse every day. Zeuthen and the churchyard, what nonsense! We had rather stay right here and see nothing at all. Come, little one, give me your arm again."

The little one, who by the way was not little, was Lena. She obeyed. But as they walked on again, the Queen continued in a confidential tone: "Oh that Johanna, one really cannot go about with her; she has not a good reputation, and she is a goose. Ah, child, you would not believe what kind of folks there are going about now; Oh well, she has a fine figure and is particular about her gloves. But she might better be particular about some other things. And if you will notice, it is always such as she who talk continually about the churchyard and dying. And now you ought to see her by and by. So long as things are all right, they are all right. But when the punch bowl comes and is emptied and comes in again, then she screeches and screams. No idea of propriety. But where should it come from? She was always amongst the commonest people, out on the Chaussée towards Tegel, where no one ever goes and only the artillery passes by. And artillery . . . Oh well. . . . You would hardly believe how different all that is. And now Serge has taken her up and is trying

to make something out of her. My goodness, it can't be done, or at least not all of a sudden; good work takes time. But here are some strawberries still. How nice! Come, little one, let us pick some (if it were not for this accursed stooping), and if we find a real big one we will take it back with us. I will put in in his mouth and he will be pleased. For I want to tell you that he is just like a child and he is just the very best man."

Lena, who saw that Balafré was referred to, asked a question or two, and also asked once more why the men had those peculiar names? She had already asked about it, but had never learned anything worth speaking of.

"Good Lord," said the Queen, "there would have to be something like that and no one should take any notice; and any way it is all put on. For in the first place no one concerns himself about it, and even if anyone did, why, it is so all the same. And why not? What harm does it do? They have nothing to cast up at one another, and each one is just like the rest."

Lena looked straight before her and kept silence.

"And really, child, you will find it out for yourself, really all this is simply tiresome. For a while it goes well enough, and I have nothing to say against it, and I will not deny it myself. But time brings weariness. Ever since you are fifteen and not even confirmed. Truly, the sooner one gets out of all this the better. Then I shall buy me a distillery (for I get plenty of money), and I already know where; and then I shall marry a widower and I already know whom. And he is willing too. For I must tell you I like order and propriety and bringing up children decently, and whether they are his or mine, it is all the same to me. . . . And how is it really with you?"

Lena did not say a word.

"Heavens, child, you are changing color; perhaps something in here (she pointed to her heart) is involved and you are doing everything for the sake of love? Ah, child, that is bad, then there is sure to be some sudden smash."

Johanna followed with Margot. They purposely kept at some little distance and plucked twigs of birch, as if they

meant to make a wreath of them. "How do you like her?" said Margot. "I mean Gaston's . . ."

"Like her? Not at all. The very idea that such girls should take a hand in the game and come to be the fashion! Just see how her gloves fit. And her hat doesn't amount to much. He ought not to let her go like that. And she must be stupid too, for she has not a word to say."

"No," said Margot "she isn't stupid; it is only that she has not struck her gait yet. And it is rather clever in her to make up to our stout friend so promptly."

"Oh, our stout friend. Get out with her. She thinks she is the whole show. But she is nothing at all. I don't believe in backbiting, but she is false, false as the wood of the gallows."

"No, Johanna, she is not really false. And she has pulled you out of a hole more than once. You know what I mean."

"Good gracious, *why* did she do it? Because she was stuck in the same hole herself, and because she always gives herself airs and thinks she is so important. Anyone as stout as that is never good."

"Lord, Johanna, how you do talk. It is just the other way around, stout people are always good."

"Well, have it your own way. But you cannot deny that she is a comical figure to look at. Just see how she waddles; like a fat duck. And always buttoned up to her chin because otherwise she would not look fit to be seen among decent people. And, Margot, I will not give way on that point, a slender figure is really the principal thing. We are not Turks, you know. And why wouldn't she go with us to the churchyard? Because she is afraid. Heaven forbid, she isn't thinking of any such thing, it's because she's buttoned up so tight and she can't stand the heat. And yet it isn't really so terribly hot to-day."

So the conversations went, until the two couples came together again and seated themselves on a moss-grown bank.

Isabeau kept looking at her watch; it seemed as if the hands would never move.

But when it was half past eleven, she said: "Now, my friends, it is time; I think we have had enough of nature and may quite properly pass on to something else. We have never had a bite to eat since early this morning at about seven. For those ham sandwiches at Grunauer do not count. . . . But the Lord be praised, self-denial brings its own reward, as Balafré says, and hunger is the best cook. Come, ladies, the saddle of venison is beginning to be more important than anything else. Don't you think so, Johanna?"

The latter shrugged her shoulders, and sought to turn aside the suspicion that any such things as venison and punch could ever matter to her.

But Isabeau laughed. "Well, we shall see, Johanna. Of course the Zeuthner churchyard would have been more enjoyable. But one must take what one can get."

And hereupon they all started to return from the woods through the garden, where a pair of yellow butterflies were fluttering together, and from the garden to the front of the house where they were to take luncheon.

As they were passing the dining-room Isabeau saw the host busily repairing the damage where a bottle of Moselle had been spilt.

"What a pity," said she, "that I had to see just that. Fate really might have afforded me a more pleasing sight. And why must it be Moselle?"

CHAPTER XIV

IN spite of all Isabeau's efforts no genuine cheerfulness would return to the group since the walk. But the worst of it was, at least for Botho and Lena, that they could not regain any real cheerfulness even after they had bidden good-bye to Botho's comrades and their ladies, and were beginning their homeward journey quite alone in a coupé that they had engaged. An hour later they had arrived, somewhat depressed, at the dimly lighted depot at Görlitz, and here, as they were getting out, Lena had at once asked quite urgently to be allowed to go the rest of the way through the city alone. "She was tired and out of sorts," she said, "and that was not good." But Botho would not be turned aside from what he considered to be his duty as an escort, and so the two together had traversed in a rickety old cab the long, long road by the canal, constantly trying to keep up a conversation about the excursion and "how lovely it had been"—a terribly forced conversation, which had made Botho feel only too plainly how right Lena's feeling had been, when in an almost imploring tone she had begged him not to escort her further. Yes, the excursion to "Hankel's Ablage" from which they had expected so much, and which had actually begun so charmingly and happily, had ended only in a mingling of ill humor, weariness and discontent; and only at the last moment, when Botho, with a certain feeling of being to blame, had bidden Lena a friendly and affectionate "good night," did she run to him, take his hand and kiss him with almost passionate impetuosity: "Ah, Botho, things were not as they should have been to-day, and yet no one was to blame . . . not even the others."

"Never mind, Lena."

"No, no. It was nobody's fault, that is the truth, and it cannot be altered. But the worst of it is, that it is true. If anyone is to blame, he can ask pardon and so make all

good again. But that is no help to us. And then too, there is nothing to forgive."

"Lena . . ."

"You must listen for a moment. Oh, my dearest Botho, you are trying to hide it from me, but the end is coming. And quickly too, I know it."

"How can you say so!"

"To be sure, I only dreamed it," Lena went on. "But why did I dream it? Because all day long it had been in my mind. My dream was only what my heart told me. And what I wanted to tell you, Botho, and the reason why I ran after you a few steps was, that what I said last night holds good. That I could pass this summer with you was a joy to me, and always will be, even if I must be unhappy from this day forth."

"Lena, Lena, do not say that . . ."

"You feel yourself that I am right; only your kind heart struggles against it and will not admit the truth. But I know it: yesterday, as we were walking across the meadow, chattering together, and I picked you the bunch of flowers, it was our last joy and our last beautiful hour."

With this interview the day had ended, and now it was the following morning, and the summer sunshine was streaming brightly into Botho's room. Both windows stood open and the sparrows were quarreling in the chestnut tree outside. Botho himself was leaning back in a rocking-chair, smoking a meerschaum pipe and striking with his handkerchief now and then at a big blue-bottle fly that came in at one window as fast as he went out of the other, to buzz persistently around Botho.

"If I could only get rid of the creature. I should enjoy tormenting it. These big flies are always bearers of bad news, and then they are as spitefully persistent as if they took pleasure in the trouble that they announce." And he struck at the fly once more. "Gone again. It is no use. Resignation then is the only help. On the whole, submission is the best. The Turks are the cleverest people."

While Botho was thus soliloquising, the shutting of the little wicket gate led him to look into the garden, where

he saw the letter carrier who had just entered and with a slight military salute and a "Good morning, Herr Baron" first handed him a paper and then a letter through the low window. Botho threw the paper aside, and looked at the letter, on which he easily recognised his mother's small, close, but still very legible handwriting. "I thought as much . . . I know already, before I have read it. Poor Lena."

And he opened the letter and read:

"SCHLOSS ZEHDEN, June 29, 1875."

"MY DEAR BOTHO:

"The apprehension of which I told you in my last letter, has now proved well founded: Rothmüller in Arnswalde has demanded his money on October 1 and only added 'Because of our old friendship' that he would wait until New Year, if it would cause me any embarrassment. 'For he knew very well what he owed to the memory of the departed Baron.' The addition of this expression, however well it may have been meant, was doubly humiliating to me; it showed such a mingling of pretentious consideration, which never makes a pleasing impression, least of all from such a source. You can perhaps understand the care and discomfort that this letter gave me. Uncle Kurt Anton would help me, as he has already done on former occasions. He loves me, and you best of all, but always to claim his benevolence again, is somewhat oppressive and all the more so because he lays the blame for our continual difficulties on our whole family, but especially on us two. In spite of my honest efforts at good management, I am not thrifty and economical enough for him, in which opinion he may be right, and you are not practical and sensible enough for him, in which opinion also he may be quite correct. Well, Botho, that is how things stand. My brother is a man of very fine feeling in regard to justice and reason, and of a perfectly remarkable generosity in money matters, which cannot be said of many of our nobility. For our good Mark of Brandenburg is a province characterized by economy and even, when help is needed, by nervous anxiety. But however kind my brother is, he has his moods and his obstinacy, and finding himself continually crossed in his wishes has for some time past put him seriously out of humor. He told me, the last time I took occasion to mention the demand for the payment of our debt which was then threatening again: 'I am very glad to be of service, sister, as you know, but I frankly confess that to be constantly obliged to help, when one could help oneself at any minute, if only one had a little more foresight and a little less self-will, makes great claims on the side of my character which was never the strongest: I mean on my indulgence. . . .' You know, Botho, to what these words of his referred, and I ask you to take them to heart to-day, just as your Uncle Kurt Anton wished me to take them to heart then. There is nothing

which causes you more cold shivers, as I conclude from your own words and letters, than sentimentality, and yet I fear that you are yourself more deeply involved in something of the kind than you are willing to confess, perhaps than you know yourself. I will say no more."

Rienäcker laid down the letter and walked up and down the room, while he half mechanically exchanged the meerschaum for a cigarette. Then he picked up the letter again and read on:

"Yes, Botho, you have the future of all of us in your hands, and it is for you to decide whether this feeling of constant dependence shall continue or cease. You have our future in your hands, I say, but I must indeed add, only for a short time yet, in any case not very much longer. Uncle Kurt Anton spoke with me about this also, especially in connection with Katherine's Mamma, Frau Sellenthin, who, when he was last in Rothenmoor, expressed herself not only very decidedly but with some access of irritation, as to this matter which interested her so keenly. Did the Rienäcker family perhaps believe that an ever-diminishing property increased constantly in value, after the manner of the Sibylline books? (Where she got the comparison, I do not know.) Katherine would soon be twenty-two, had had enough social experience to form her manners, and with the addition of an inheritance from her Aunt Kielmannsegge would control a property whose income would not fall far behind that of the Rienäckers' forest land and the eel pond together. It was not fitting to keep such young girls waiting, especially with such coolness and placidity. If Herr von Rienäcker chose to drop all that had formerly been planned and discussed by the family and to regard agreements that had been made as mere child's play, she had nothing to say against it. Herr von Rienäcker would be free from the moment when he wished to be free. But if, on the contrary, he did not intend to make use of this unconditional freedom to withdraw, it was time to make his intentions known. She did not wish her daughter to be talked about.

"You will not find it difficult to see from the tone of these words, that it is absolutely necessary to come to a decision and to act. You know what my wishes are. But my wishes ought not to bind you. Act as your own intelligence dictates, decide one way or the other, only act. A withdrawal is more honorable than further procrastination. If you delay longer, we shall lose not only the bride, but the whole Sellenthin house as well, and what is worst of all, the friendly and helpful disposition of your Uncle also. My thoughts are with you, and I wish that they might guide you. I repeat, this is the way to happiness for you and for us all. And now I remain, your loving Mother,

"JOSEPHINE VON R."

When he had read the letter, Botho was much excited. It was just as the letter said, and further delay was no longer possible. The Rienäcker property was not in good condition and there were embarrassments which he did not feel the power to clear away through his own energy and ability. "Who am I? An average man from the so-called upper circle of society. And what can I do? I can ride and train a horse, carve a capon and play cards. That is all and therefore I have the choice between a trick rider, and a head butler and a croupier. At the most I might add a soldier, if I am willing to join a foreign legion. And then Lena could go with me as daughter of the regiment. I can see her now with a short skirt and high-heeled shoes and a knapsack on her back."

He went on speaking in this tone, and actually enjoyed saying bitter things to himself. Finally, however, he rang and ordered his horse, because he meant to go riding. And it was not long before his beautiful chestnut, a present from his uncle and the envy of his comrades, was waiting outside. He sprang into the saddle, gave the stable boy some orders and rode to the Moabiter Bridge, after crossing which, he turned into a broad road that led over fens and fields to the Jungfern Haide. Here he let his horse change from a trot to a walk, and while he had thus far pursued all sorts of dim thoughts, he now began to cross-examine himself more sharply every moment. "What is it then that hinders me from taking the step that everyone expects of me? Do I mean to marry Lena? No. Have I promised her that I would? No. Does she expect it? No. Or would the parting be any easier if I should postpone it? No. Still no, again and again. And yet I delay and hesitate to do the one thing which positively must be done. And why do I delay? What is the cause of this vacillating and postponing? Foolish question. Because I love her."

His soliloquy was here interrupted by the sound of gun shots from the Tegler shooting range, and only when he had once more quieted his restive horse did he take up again the thread of his thoughts and repeat: "Because I love her! Yes. And why should I be ashamed of this

affection? Feeling reigns over all, and the fact that one loves also gives one the right to love, no matter how much the world may shake its head or talk about riddles. For that matter it is no riddle, and even if it were I can solve it. Every man according to his own nature is dependent upon certain little things, sometimes very, very little things, which in spite of being so small, mean life for him or the best there is in life. And for me the best there is in life is simplicity, truth, naturalness. Lena has all this, that is how she won me, and there lies the magic from which it now seems so difficult to free myself."

Just now his horse shied and he saw a hare that had been driven out of a strip of meadow land, and was darting right in front of him towards the Jungfern Haide. He watched the creature curiously and only resumed his reflections when the fugitive had disappeared among the trunks of the trees. "And was what I wanted," he went on, "anything so foolish and impossible? No. It isn't in me to challenge the world and declare open war against its judgments; besides, I do not believe in such quixotism. All that I wanted was a still, secluded happiness, a happiness which I expected would sooner or later win the approval of society, because I should have spared it the shock of defiance. Such was my dream, such were my hopes and my thoughts. And now shall I abandon this happiness and exchange it for another that is no happiness to me? I am wholly indifferent to a *salon*, and I feel a repulsion for all that is untrue, high-flown, dressed up or disguised. *Chic, tournure, savoir faire*—are all just as ugly to me as their foreign names."

At this point in Botho's reflections, the horse, whose reins had been lying loose for the past quarter of an hour, turned as if of its own accord into a side path, which led first to a bit of farm land and immediately behind this to a grass plot surrounded by undergrowth and a few oak trees. Here, in the shade of an old tree, stood a low, solid cross, and as he rode up to have a better look at the cross, he read: "Ludwig v. Hinckeldey, died March 10, 1856." What an impression this made upon him! He had known that the cross was somewhere in this region, but had never been

exactly here before, and he now regarded it as a sign, that his horse left to his own devices had brought him to this very spot.

Hinckeldey! It was now nearly twenty years since the death of this man, whose power was then almost absolute; and everything that had been said in his parents' house when the news came, now came back vividly to Botho's mind. And more clearly than anything else he remembered one story. One of the citizens, who was especially trusted in other ways as an adviser by his chief had warned and admonished him against duels in general, and especially against such a duel under such circumstances, as a folly and a crime. But his chief, suddenly taking his stand as a nobleman on this occasion, had answered brusquely and haughtily: "Nörner, you do not understand anything about such matters." And an hour later he was dead. And why? For the sake of a conception of what was required of a nobleman, for a whim of a class of society, which proved more powerful than reason, even more powerful than the law to uphold and protect, which was especially his duty. "Instructive." And what in particular have I to learn from this story? What does this monument preach to me? In any case, one thing, that our ancestry determines our deeds. He who obeys this principle may go to ruin, but he goes to ruin in a better way than he who disobeys it.

While he was thinking thus, he turned his horse around and rode across the field towards a great factory, a rolling mill or a machine shop, from the many chimneys of which flames and smoke were rising. It was noon, and part of the workmen were sitting outside in the shade, eating their dinner. The women, who had brought them their food, stood near by chatting, several with babies in their arms, laughing amongst themselves whenever a playful or sarcastic remark was made. Rienäcker, who quite rightly believed that he appreciated naturalness, was delighted with this picture, and with a sort of envy he gazed at the group of happy people. "Work and daily bread and an orderly life. When our people from the Mark marry, they have nothing to say about love and passion, they merely say: 'I need to lead an orderly life.' And that is a fine trait in

the life of our people and not at all prosaic. For order is a great thing, and sometimes it is worth everything. And now I must ask myself, has my life been 'orderly'? No. Order means marriage." In this strain he talked to himself for a while longer and then he saw Lena standing before him once more, but she did not look at him reproachfully or complainingly, but rather the reverse, as if she were in friendly agreement with him.

"Yes, my dear Lena, you too believe in work and orderly living, and you will understand and not make it hard for me . . . but it is hard all the same . . . for you and for me."

He put his horse to the trot again and kept along by the Spree for a little while more. Then, however, he turned aside into a bridle path, which led past the tents which lay in the noonday silence, then past the Wrangel Spring and soon afterwards to his own door.

CHAPTER XV

BOTHO wanted to go to Lena at once, and when he felt that he had not strength enough for that, he wanted at least to write. But even that was too much for him. "I cannot do it, not to-day." And so he let the day go by and waited until the next morning. Then he wrote very briefly.

"DEAR LENA:

"Things are turning out, just as you told me the day before yesterday. We must part. And we must part forever. I have had letters from home which compel me; it must be, and since it must be, let it be quickly. . . . Ah, I wish these days lay behind us. I will say no more, not even how my heart aches. . . . It was a beautiful time, though so brief, and I shall never forget anything that has been. Towards nine I shall come to you, not earlier, for it must not last long. Auf Wiedersehen! only this once more, auf Wiedersehen!

Your own,

"B. v. R."

And so he came. Lena was standing at the gate and received him as usual; not the slightest trace of reproach or even of painful renunciation was to be seen in her face. She took his arm and so they walked along the front garden path.

"It is right that you have come . . . I am happy because you are here. And you must be happy too."

With these words they reached the house, and Botho started to go into the large front room as usual. But Lena led him further along and said: "No. Frau Dörr is in there."

"And is she still angry with us?"

"Oh, no. I comforted her. But what do we want with her to-day? Come, it is such a beautiful evening and we want to be alone."

Botho agreed, and so they went along the passage and across the yard to the garden. Sultan did not stir and only blinked at the two, as they followed the long middle

path and then went over to the bench that stood between the raspberry bushes.

They sat down on the bench. It was very still, only they could hear a chirping from the fields beyond and the moon was high above them.

She leaned against him and said quietly and affectionately: "And so this is the last time that I shall hold your hand in mine?"

"Yes, Lena. Can you forgive me?"

"How can you always ask that? What have I to forgive?"

"That I make your heart ache."

"Yes, it aches. That is true."

And she was silent again and looked up at the dim stars that were appearing in the sky.

"What are you thinking of, Lena?"

"How beautiful it would be if I were up there."

"Do not speak so. You ought not to wish your life to be over; it is only a step from such a wish . . ."

She smiled. "No, not that. I am not like the girl who ran and threw herself into the well, because her sweetheart danced with some one else. Do you remember when you told me about that?"

"But what do you mean then? It does not seem like you to say such a thing, just for the sake of talking."

"No, I meant it seriously. And really" (she pointed up to the sky), "I should be glad to be there. Then I should be at peace. But I can wait. . . . And now come, let us walk out in the fields. I brought no wrap and I find it cold sitting still."

And so they followed the same path through the fields that had led them the other time as far as the first houses of Wilmersdorf. The tower was plainly visible under the bright starry sky while a thin mist was drifting over the meadow land.

"Do you remember," said Botho, "how we took this same walk with Frau Dörr?"

She nodded. "That is why I proposed to come here; I was not chilly, or scarcely at all. Ah, that was such a beautiful day and I have never been so gay and happy, either before or afterwards. Even now my heart laughs, when

I think how we walked along singing, 'Do you remember.' Yes, memory means so much—it means everything. And I have that and I can keep it and nothing can ever take it away from me. And I can feel plainly how it will lighten my heart."

He embraced her. "You are so good."

But Lena went on quietly: "And I will not let it pass without telling you all about it, how it is that my heart is so light. Really it is just the same thing that I told you before, the day before yesterday, when we were in the country on our half-spoiled excursion, and afterwards when we were saying good-bye. I always saw this coming, even from the beginning, and nothing has happened but what had to happen. If one has had a beautiful dream, one should thank the Lord for it, and not lament that the dream ends and reality begins again. It is hard now, but all will be forgotten or will seem pleasant again. And some day you will be happy again and perhaps I shall too."

"Do you believe so? And if not? What then?"

"Then we must live without happiness."

"Ah, Lena, you say that as if happiness were nothing. But it is something, and that is what distresses me, and it seems to me as if I had done you an injustice."

"I absolve you from that. You have done me no injustice, you did not lead me astray and you made me no promise. Everything was my own free choice. I loved you with all my heart. That was my fate, and if it was a sin, then it was my sin, and more than that, a sin in which I rejoice with all my heart, as I have told you again and again, because it was my joy. If I must pay for it, I will pay gladly. You have not injured, hurt, or damaged anything, unless perhaps what men call propriety and good morals. Shall I distress myself about that? No. Everything will come right again, and that too. And now come, let us turn back. See how the mist is rising; I think Frau Dörr must have gone home by this time and we shall find my good old mother alone. She knows everything, and all day long she has only said the one same thing."

"And that was?"

"That all was for the best."

Frau Nimptsch was alone, as Botho and Lena came in. The room was still and dusky and only the firelight flickered amongst the great shadows that lay across the room. The goldfinch was already asleep in his cage, and there was not a sound but now and then the hissing of the boiling water.

"Good evening, Mutterchen," said Botho.

The old woman returned his greeting and was going to rise from her footstool to draw up the big armchair. But Botho would not allow it and said: "No, Mutterchen, I will sit in my old place."

And he pushed the wooden stool up to the fire.

There was a short pause; but soon he began again: "I have come to-day to bid good-bye and to thank you for all the loving-kindness that I have enjoyed here so long. Yes, I thank you from my heart. I was so happy and always loved to be here. But now I must leave you, and now I can only say that perhaps it is better so."

The old woman did not speak but nodded as if in agreement.

"But I shall not be gone out of the world." Botho went on, "and I shall not forget you. And now give me your hand. That is right. And now good-night."

Hereupon he rose quickly and walked to the door, while Lena clung to his arm. And so they walked as far as the garden gate, without another word being spoken. But then Lena said: "Quick now, Botho. My strength will not hold out any longer; these two days have really been too much. Farewell, my dearest, and may you be as happy as you deserve to be, and as happy as you have made me. Then you will be happy. And we will not talk about the rest, it is not worth while. There, there."

And she kissed him again and again and then closed the gate. As he stood on the other side of the street, he seemed, when he saw Lena, as if he must turn back for one more word, for one more kiss. But she made an urgent gesture of refusal. And so he walked on down the street, while she, leaning on the gatepost, with her head supported on her arm, gazed after him with wide eyes.

So she stood for a long time until his footsteps had died away in the silence of the night.

CHAPTER XVI

THE wedding had taken place about the middle of September on the Sellenthins' estate, Rothenmoor. Uncle Osten, who was usually no speaker, had offered his good wishes to the bridal pair in what was undoubtedly the longest toast of his life. And on the next day the following notice appeared among other family items in the "Kreuzzeitung": "Botho Freiherr von Rienäcker, First Lieutenant in the Imperial Regiment of Cuirassiers, and Katherine Freifrau von Rienäcker, née Sellenthin have the honor to announce their marriage which took place yesterday." Naturally the "Kreuzzeitung" was not the paper which usually found its way to the Dörrs' dwelling nor to the other house in their garden, but the very next morning there came a letter addressed to Fräulein Magdalena Nimptsch, containing nothing but a newspaper clipping containing the marriage notice. Lena was startled, but regained her self-control more quickly than the sender, apparently some envious acquaintance, might have anticipated. That the clipping came from such a source was easily seen from the addition of "Hochwohlgeboren" (well born). But this gratuitous freak of sarcasm, which was intended to double her pain, stood Lena in good stead and diminished the bitter feeling that the news would otherwise have caused her.

Botho and Katherine von Rienäcker started for Dresden the very day of the wedding, after both had happily withstood the enticement of a tour of visits among the Neumark relatives. And actually they had no reason to repent their choice, certainly Botho had not, for every day he congratulated himself not only upon his stay in Dresden, but still more upon the possession of a young wife who seemed to know nothing of caprice or ill humor. She actually laughed all day long, and her nature was as bright and clear as

her complexion. She was delighted with everything and saw the cheerful side of everything. At their hotel there was a waiter with a forelock that looked like the crest of a breaking wave, and this waiter with his coiffure was a source of constant amusement to her, so much so, that although she was not usually very witty, she simply outdid herself in images and comparisons. Botho also was amused and laughed heartily, until suddenly a shade of doubt and even of discomfort began to mingle with his laughter. That is, he began to notice that whatever happened or came in sight, she took notice only of the trivial and the comical side of it. And at the close of a pleasant fortnight spent in Dresden, as the couple were beginning their homeward journey to Berlin, a short conversation fully enlightened him as to this side of his wife's character. They had a coupé to themselves and as they looked back from the bridge over the Elbe to take farewell of old Dresden and the tower of the Frauenkirche, Botho said, as he took her hand: "And now tell me, Katherine, what was really the most beautiful thing here in Dresden?"

"Guess."

"But that is difficult, for you have your own tastes, and I know you do not care for church music and Holbein's Madonnas. . . ."

"No. You are right there. And since my lord and master is so serious I will not keep him waiting and tormenting himself any longer. There were three things that I was delighted with: first, the confectioner's shop at the Old Market and the Scheffelgassen corner, with those wonderful pasties and liqueurs. Just to sit there. . . ."

"But, Katherine, one could not sit at all, one could scarcely stand, and it seemed as if one had to get every mouthful by force."

"That was just it. That was the very reason, my dear. Whatever one must win by force . . ."

And she turned away roguishly pretending to pout, until he kissed her ardently.

"I see," she laughed, "that you really agree with me and as a reward I will tell you the second and third too. The second thing was the summer theater in the suburbs,

where we saw 'Monsieur Hercules' and Knaak drummed the Tannhäuser March on a rickety old whist table. I never saw anything so comical in all my life, and I don't believe you ever did either. It was really too funny. . . . And the third . . . was 'Bacchus Riding on the He-goat' in the Art Museum and the 'Dog Scratching Himself' by Peter Vischer."

"I thought it was something like that; and when Uncle Osten hears about it he will think you are quite right and he will be fonder of you than ever and will say still oftener than before; I tell you, Botho, Katherine . . ."

"And isn't he right?"

"Why surely he is."

And with these words their conversation ceased for some minutes, leaving in Botho's mind, however tenderly he gazed upon his young bride, a somewhat painful impression. The young woman herself had meanwhile no suspicion of what was taking place in her husband's mind, and only said: "I am tired, Botho. So many pictures. It comes over me afterwards. . . . But [the train was just stopping] what is the noise and excitement outside?"

"That is some Dresden pleasure resort, Kötchenbroda, I think."

"Kötchenbroda? How comical."

And as the train went on again, she stretched herself out and apparently closed her eyes. But she was not asleep and was watching her dear husband between her eyelashes.

On the Landgrafenstrasse, which still had houses on one side only, Katherine's mother had in the meantime arranged the home for the young couple, who were much pleased with the comfort that they found awaiting them when they arrived in Berlin at the beginning of October. Fire was burning in the fireplaces of the two front rooms, but the doors and windows stood open, for the autumn air was mild and the fire was only for the sake of cheerfulness and for ventilation. But the most attractive thing was the large balcony with its low-hanging awning, under which one could look straight out over the open country, first

over the birch woods and the Zoological Garden and beyond that as far as the northern point of the Grünewald.

Katherine clapped her hands for joy over this beautiful wide view, embraced her mother, kissed Botho and then suddenly pointed to the left, where between scattered poplars and willows a shingled tower could be seen. "See, Botho, how comical. It looks as if it had been notched three times. And the village near by. What is it called?"

"Wilmersdorf, I believe," stammered Botho.

"Very well, Wilmersdorf. But what do you mean by 'I believe'? You surely must know the names of the villages hereabouts. Only look, mamma, doesn't he look as if he had been betraying a state secret? Nothing is more comical than these men."

And then they left the balcony, and went into the room near it to take their first luncheon *en famille*: only Katherine's mother, the young couple and Serge, who had been invited as the only guest.

Rienäcker's house was scarcely a thousand steps from that of Frau Nimptsch. But Lena did not know that and often passed through the Landgrafenstrasse, which she would have avoided if she had had the slightest suspicion that Botho lived so near.

Yet it could not long remain a secret to her.

The third week in October was beginning, but it was still like summer and the sun shone so warm, that one could scarcely notice the slight sharpness in the air.

"I must go into town to-day, mother," said Lena. "I have a letter from Goldstein. He wants to speak to me about a pattern that is to be embroidered on the Princess Waldeck's linen. And while I am in town, I shall also go to see Frau Demuth in old Jakobstrasse. Otherwise one would never see a soul. But I shall be back at about noon. I shall tell Frau Dörr, so that she will keep an eye on you."

"Never mind, Lena, never mind. I like best to be alone. And Frau Dörr talks so much and always about her husband. And I have my fire. And when the goldfinch chirps, that is company enough for me. But if you could bring

me a bag of candy, I have so much trouble with my throat tickling and malt candy is so loosening . . ."

"Very well, mother."

And then Lena left the quiet little house and walked first along the Kurfürsten Strasse and then the Potsdamer Strasse, to the Spittelmarkt, where the Goldstein Brothers' place of business was. All went well and it was nearly noon. Lena was homeward bound, and this time had chosen to pass through the Lützowstrasse instead of the Kurfürsten Strasse as before. The sun did her good and the bustle and stir on the Magdeburg Square, where the weekly market was being held and everything was being made ready for departure, pleased her so much that she paused to watch the cheerful activity. She was quite absorbed in this and was only aroused when the fire apparatus rushed by her with a great noise.

Lena listened until the rumbling and ringing had vanished in the distance, but then she glanced to the left at the clock tower of the Church of the Twelve Apostles. "Just twelve," said she. "Now I shall have to hurry; she always grows uneasy if I come home later than she expects me." And so she went on down the Lützowstrasse to the square of the same name. But suddenly she paused and did not know which way to turn, for at a little distance she recognised Botho, who was coming directly towards her, with a pretty young lady leaning on his arm. The young lady was speaking with animation and apparently about droll or cheerful things, for Botho was laughing all the time, as he looked down at her. It was to this circumstance that she owed the fact that she had not been observed long before, and quickly deciding to avoid a meeting with him at any price, she turned to the right of the sidewalk and stepped up to the nearest large show window, before which there was a square iron plate, probably used as a cover for the opening to a cellar. The window itself belonged to an ordinary grocery store, with the usual assortment of stearine candles and bottles of mixed pickles, in no way uncommon, but Lena stared at them as if she had never seen the like before. And truly it was time, for at this very moment the young couple passed close to her and

not a word of the conversation between them escaped her.

"Katherine, don't talk so loud," said Botho, "people will be staring at us."

"Let them . . ."

"But they must think we are quarreling . . ."

"While we are laughing? Quarrelling and laughing at once?" And she laughed again.

Lena felt the thin iron plate on which she stood tremble. A horizontal brass rod ran across in front of the show window to protect the large pane of glass and for a moment it seemed to Lena as if she must catch at this rod for help and support, but she managed to stand straight, and only when she could make sure that the pair were far enough away did she turn to walk homeward. She felt her way cautiously along close to the houses and got on well enough at first. But soon she felt as if she were going to faint, and when she reached the next side street that led toward the canal, she turned into it and stepped through an open gate into a garden. It was with difficulty that she dragged herself as far as a little flight of steps that led to a veranda and terrace, and sat down, nearly fainting, on one of the steps.

As she came to herself, she saw that a half-grown girl, with a little spade in her hand with which she had been digging small beds, was standing near her and looking at her sympathetically, while from the veranda railing an old nurse regarded her with scarcely less curiosity. Apparently no one but the child and the old servant was at home, and Lena rose and thanked them both and walked back to the gate. But the half-grown girl looked after her with sad and wondering eyes, and it almost seemed as if some premonition of the sorrows of life had dawned upon her childish heart.

Meanwhile Lena, having crossed the embankment, had reached the canal, and now walked along at the foot of the slope where she could be sure of meeting nobody. From the boats a Spitz dog barked now and then, and as it was noontime a thin smoke rose from the little stove-pipes of the galleys. But she saw and heard nothing of

what was going on, or at least had no clear consciousness of it, and only where beyond the Zoological Garden the houses by the canal came to an end and the great lock gate with the water rushing and foaming over it came in sight, did she stand still and struggle for breath. "Ah, if I could only cry." And she pressed her hand to her heart.

At home she found her mother in her accustomed place and sat down opposite her, without a word or a glance being exchanged between them. But suddenly the old woman, who had been looking all the time in the same direction, glanced up from the fire and was startled at the change in Lena's face.

"Lena, child, what is wrong with you? How you do look, Lena?" And although she was usually slow in her movements, she jumped up in a moment from her bench and got the jug, to sprinkle water on Lena, who still sat as if she were half dead. But the jug was empty and so she hobbled into the passageway and from there into the yard and the garden, to call good Frau Dörr, who was cutting wallflowers and honeysuckle for bouquets for the market. Her old husband stood near her and was just saying: "Don't use up too much string again."

When Frau Dörr, heard from some little distance the distressed cry of the old woman, she turned pale and called back "I am coming, Mother Nimptsch, I am coming," and throwing down whatever she had in her hands, she ran at once to the little house, saying to herself that something must be wrong there.

"Yes, just as I thought . . . Lena." And she vigorously shook the young girl, who still sat lifeless as before, while the old woman slowly shuffled in from the passageway.

"We must put her to bed," said Frau Dörr, and Frau Nimptsch started to take hold with her. But that was not what the stronger woman meant by "we". "I can manage alone, Mother Nimptsch," and taking Lena in her arms, she carried her into the next room and covered her over.

"There, Mother Nimptsch. Now a hot cover. I know what is the trouble, it comes from the blood. First a cover and then a hot brick to the soles of her feet; but

put it right under the instep, that is where the life is. . . . But what brought it on? It must have been some shock."

"I don't know. She didn't say anything. But I think that perhaps she saw him."

"That is so. That's it. I know about that. . . . But now shut the window and draw down the blinds. . . . Some people believe in camphor and Hoffmann's drops, but camphor is so weakening and is really only fit for moths. No, dear Frau Nimptsch, nature must help itself, and especially when one is so young, and so I believe in sweating. But thoroughly. And what makes all the trouble? The men. And yet we need them and must have them. . . . There, her color is coming back."

"Hadn't we better send for a doctor?"

"Heaven forbid! They are all out going their rounds now and before one of them would get here she might die and come to life again three times over."

CHAPTER XVII

TWO and a half years had passed since this meeting, during which time many things had changed in our circle of friends and acquaintances, but not among those of the Landgrafenstrasse.

The same good humor continued there, the gayety of the honeymoon still remained, and Katherine continued to laugh as of old. What might perhaps have troubled other young women, that they had no children, did not disturb Katherine for a moment. She enjoyed life so much and found such complete satisfaction in dressing and small-talk, in riding and driving, that she shrank from any change in her way of life rather than desired it. The feeling for family life, to say nothing of any real longing for it, had not yet awakened in her and when her mother made some remark in a letter about such matters, Katherine answered somewhat heretically: "Don't trouble yourself, mamma. Botho's brother has just become engaged, and in six months he will be married and I shall gladly leave to my future sister-in-law the care of providing for the continuance of the house of Rienäcker."

Botho did not take exactly this view, but even his happiness was not seriously disturbed by the lack of children, and if from time to time he had a discontented mood, it was chiefly because, as he had already found out on his wedding journey to Dresden, he could perhaps talk somewhat reasonably with Katherine, but any really serious speech with her was wholly out of the question. She was talkative and sometimes even had bright ideas, but the best things she ever said were but superficial and trivial, as if she were unable to distinguish between important and unimportant things. And what was the worst of all, she considered all this as a merit, and plumed herself on it and never thought of correcting the habit. "But, Katherine, Katherine," Botho would exclaim sometimes, and the tone

of his voice would show some displeasure, but her happy nature could always disarm him again, so completely, indeed, that his own expectations seemed almost pedantic to him.

Lena with her simplicity, genuineness, and directness of speech often recurred to his mind, but vanished again as quickly; and only when chance recalled some special incident very vividly did her image come to him with greater distinctness, and perhaps a stronger feeling with which some embarrassment was mingled.

Such an incident happened during the first summer, when the young couple, who had returned from dining with Count Alten, were sitting on the balcony taking tea. Katherine was leaning back in her chair listening to a newspaper article which was profusely interpersed with figures, and dealt with the subject of minister's salaries and surplice fees. She actually understood very little of the subject, and all the less because the many figures troubled her, but she listened rather attentively, because all the young girls of her province spend half their youth "with the minister" and so they retain a certain sympathy with the affairs of the parsonage. This was the case to-day. Finally evening came on and just as it was growing dark the concert at the Zoological Garden began and the tones of a ravishing Strauss Waltz reached them.

"Only listen, Botho," said Katherine, rising, while she added eagerly: "Come, let us dance." And without waiting for his consent, she pulled him up out of his chair and waltzed with him into the large room from which the balcony opened and then two or three times around the room. Then she kissed him, and while she clung to him caressingly she said: "Do you know, Botho, I never danced so wonderfully before, not even at my first ball, that I went to while I was still at Frau Zülow's and had not yet been confirmed, if I must confess it. Uncle Osten took me on his own responsibility and mamma knows nothing about it to this very day. But even then it was not so lovely as to-day. And yet forbidden fruit is the sweetest. Isn't it? But you are not saying anything, Botho, you seem embarrassed. See, now I have caught you again."

He attempted to say something or other, but she did not give him a chance to speak. "I really believe, Botho, my sister Ina has taken your fancy and it is of no use your trying to comfort me by saying that she is only a little half-grown girl or not much more. Those are always the most dangerous. Don't you think so? Now I am not going to take any notice and I do not grudge it to you or to her. But I am very jealous about old affairs of long ago, far, far more jealous than of things that may happen now."

"How curious," said Botho, and tried to laugh.

"And yet after all it is not so curious as it may look," Katherine went on. "Don't you see, affairs that are going on now one has almost under one's eyes; and it must be a hard case and an arch deceiver, if one should notice nothing and so be completely betrayed. But there is no control possible over old stories; there might be a thousand and three, and one might hardly know it."

"And what one does not know . . ."

"May make one's anger grow. But let us drop all this and read me something more from the paper. I was reminded constantly of our Kluckhuhns. And the good wife can't understand it, and the oldest boy is just going to the University.

Such incidents happened more and more frequently and led Botho to recall old times as well as Lena's image; but he never saw her, which surprised him, because he knew that they were almost neighbors.

This surprised him and yet it would have been easily explained had he promptly ascertained that Frau Nimptsch and Lena were no longer living at the old place. And yet this was the case. From the day when she had met the young couple on the Lützowstrasse, Lena had told her old mother that she could no longer stay in the Dörr's house. And when Mother Nimptsch, who used never to contradict her, shook her head and whimpered and continually pointed to the fireplace, Lena said: "Mother, you know me. I will never rob you of your open fire; you shall have everything again that you have had; I have saved up money enough

for it, and even if I had not, I would work until I had got it together. But we must get away from here. Every day I should have to pass that way, and I could never stand it, mother. I do not grudge him his happiness, and what is more, I am glad that he has it. God is my witness, for he was a dear, good man and lived only for my sake; no pride, no stinginess. And I will say it right out, for all that I cannot bear fine gentlemen, he is a real nobleman, and his heart is in the right place. Yes, my dear Botho, you must be happy, as happy as you deserve to be. But I cannot bear to see it, mother, I must get away from here, for I cannot take ten steps without imagining that he is right there before me. And that keeps me all in a tremble. No, no, it will never do. But you shall have your fireplace. I am your Lena, and I promise you that."

After this talk there was no more opposition on the part of old Frau Nimptsch and even Frau Dörr said: "Of course, you will have to go. And it serves that old miser, Dörr, right. He is always grumbling at me that you are getting the place too cheap and that what you pay would never cover rent and repairs. Now let him see how he likes it when he has the whole place standing empty. For that is how it will be. For who is going to move into such a doll's house, where every cat can peek in at the window and there is no gas nor running water. Well, it is plain; you can give a quarter's notice and at Easter you can leave, and it will do him no good to make a fuss. And I am really glad of it; yes, Lena, I am so glad. But then I have to pay for my bit of malice too, For when you are gone, child, and good Frau Nimptsch with her fire and her teakettle that is always boiling, what shall I have left, Lena? Only him and Sultan and the poor foolish boy, who keeps growing more foolish. And nobody else in the world. And when it grows cold and the snow falls, it is enough to drive one crazy, simply sitting still and all alone."

Such were the early discussions, since Lena held fast to her plan of moving, and at Easter time, a furniture wagon drew up before the door to carry away her household possessions. Old Dörr had behaved surprisingly well

at the last and after a formal farewell Frau Nimptsch was bundled into a Droschke with her squirrel and her goldfinch and carried to the Luise Bank, where Lena had hired a charming little flat, three flights up, and had not only gotten a little new furniture, but had remembered her promise, and had arranged to have a pleasant open fireplace built on to the big stove in the front room. The landlord had at first made all sorts of difficulties, "because such an addition would ruin the stove." But Lena had persevered and had given her reasons, which made such an impression on the landlord, an old master-carpenter who was pleased with such ideas, that at last he was disposed to yield.

The two now lived in much the same way that they had formerly done in the house in the Dörr's garden, only with this difference, that they were now three flights up and that they looked out upon the beautiful tower of Michael's church instead of the fantastic tower of the elephants' house. Indeed, the view that they enjoyed was delightful, and so free and fine that it even influenced the habits of old Frau Nimptsch and induced her not to sit all the time on the bench by the fire, but when the sun was shining, to sit by the open window, where Lena had managed to have a little platform placed. All this did old Frau Nimptsch a great deal of good and even improved her health, so that since her change of abode, she suffered much less pain than in the Dörr's little house, which, however poetically it was situated, was not much better than a cellar.

For the rest, never a week passed without Frau Dörr's coming all the long distance from the Zoological Garden to the Luise Bank, simply "to see how everything was going on." During these visits she talked, after the manner of Berlin wives, exclusively about her husband, and always in a tone which implied that her marriage to him had been one of the most dreadful mésalliances and really half inexplicable. In fact, however, she was extremely comfortable and contented, and was actually glad that Dörr had his peculiarities. For she reaped only advantages from them, first, to grow richer all the time, and second (an advantage which she valued quite as highly) without any danger of change or loss of property she could continually hold her-

self superior to the old miser and reproach him for his niggardly ways. So Dörr was the principal theme of these conversations and Lena, unless she was at Goldstein's or somewhere else in town, always laughed heartily with the others, all the more so because she, as well as Frau Nimptsch, had visibly improved in health since they had moved. The moving in, buying and placing of house furnishings had, as one may imagine, led her away from her own thoughts from the beginning and what was still more helpful and important for her health and the recovery of her spirits was that she no longer needed to fear a meeting with Botho. Who came away out to the Luise Bank? Certainly not Botho. All this combined to make her seem comparatively fresh and cheerful again, and only one outward sign remained of the struggles she had been through: in the midst of her long hair there was one white strand. Mother Nimptsch either did not notice this or did not think much about it, but Frau Dörr, who in her own way followed the fashions and was uncommonly proud of her own braid of hair, noticed the white lock at once and said: "Good Lord, Lena. And right on the left side. But naturally . . . that is where the trouble is . . . it would have to be on the left."

It was soon after the moving that this conversation took place. Otherwise there was usually no mention either of Botho or of the old days, which was simply because whenever the gossip turned in this special direction, Lena always broke off the conversation quickly or even left the room. As this happened again and again, Frau Dörr remarked it and learned to keep silence about topics which proved unwelcome. So things went on for a year and then there appeared another reason that made it seem inadvisable to recall past incidents. A new neighbour had hired a room just on the other side of the wall from Frau Nimptsch, and while he seemed to wish to be on neighbourly terms from the beginning, he soon promised to become even more than a good neighbour. He would come in every evening and talk, so that it seemed like the old times when Dörr used to sit on his stool smoking his pipe, only that the new neighbour was very different in many ways. He was

a correct and well educated man, with very proper although not exactly fine manners, and was also a good talker. When Lena was present, he would talk about all sorts of town affairs, such as schools, gas works, or canals, and sometimes also about his travels. If it happened that he found the old lady alone, he was not at all annoyed, but would play "everlasting" or checkers or would help her with a game of patience, in spite of the fact that he hated cards. For he was a Conventicler, and after he had taken some part with the Mennonites and later with the followers of Irving, he had still more recently founded a separate sect.

As may be readily imagined, all this aroused Frau Dörr's curiosity to the highest pitch, and she was never weary of asking questions, and making allusions, but only when Lena was busy at some household task or had matters to attend to in town. "Tell me, dear Frau Nimptsch, just what is he, really? I have tried to hunt him up, but he is not in the book; Dörr never has any later one than year before last. His name is Franke?"

"Yes, Franke."

"Franke. There used to be one on the Ohmgasse, a master cooper, and he had only one eye; that is, the other eye was still there, but it was all white and looked just like a fish's bladder. And what do you suppose had happened to it? When he went to put on a hoop, it had sprung loose and the end had hit him in the eye. That is how it was. Could he have come from there?"

"No, Frau Dörr, he is not from anywhere near here. He is from Bremen."

"Well, well. Then of course it is quite natural."

Frau Nimptsch nodded in assent, without seeking to be further enlightened as to this "naturalness," and went on talking herself: "And it only takes a fortnight to go from Bremen to America. And he has been there. And he was a tinman or a locksmith or a workman in a machine shop or something like that, but when he saw that he could not make it go, he became a doctor and went around with a lot of little bottles and he began to preach too. And because he preached so well, he got a position with the . . . There now, I have forgotten it again. But they

must have been very pious people and good proper people too."

"Glory be to God!" said Frau Dörr. "Surely he was not. . . . Heavens, what is the name of those people that have so many wives, always six or seven and sometimes even more. . . . I don't know what they do with so many."

This theme seemed made on purpose for Frau Dörr. But Frau Nimptsch reassured her friend: "No, dear Frau Dörr, it is quite different. At first I thought it was something like that, but he laughed and said: 'The Lord forbid, Frau Nimptsch. I am a bachelor. And if I ever marry, I think one will be quite enough.'"

"Oh, that takes a load off my heart," said Frau Dörr. "And what happened afterwards? I mean over in America."

"Well, after that everything went well and it was not long till he had help enough. For religious people are always helping each other. And he found customers again and got back to his old trade. And that is what he works at now, and he is in a big factory here on the Köpnickerstrasse, where they make little tubes and burners and stopcocks and everything that is needed for gas. And he is the chief man, something like a foreman carpenter or foreman mason, and has perhaps a hundred under him. And he is a very respectable man and he wears a tall hat and black gloves. And he has a good salary too."

"And Lena?"

"Oh, Lena, she would take him all right. And why not? But she cannot hold her tongue, and if he comes and says anything to her, she is going to tell him everything, all the old stories, first the one with Kuhlwein (and that is so long ago that it is just as if it never had happened), and then all about the Baron. And Franke, you must know, is a refined and well-behaved man, and really a gentleman."

"We must persuade her out of that. He does not need to know everything; why should he? We never know everything."

"Yes, yes. But Lena . . ."

CHAPTER XVIII

IT was now June, 1878. Frau von Rienäcker and Frau von Sellenthin had spent the month of May on a visit with the young couple; and the mother and the mother-in-law had day by day convinced each other that Katherine looked paler and more bloodless and languid than she had ever been before, and needless to say they had incessantly urged that a specialist should be consulted, by whose advice, after a gynecological examination (which, by the way, proved very expensive), a four weeks' stay at the Schlangenbad health resort was pronounced indispensable and was accordingly decided upon. Schwalbach might be useful later. Katherine laughed and would not hear of any such thing, especially of Schlangenbad, "the name sounded so uncanny and she already seemed to feel a viper in her bosom," but finally she had yielded and had found in the preparations for the journey a far greater contentment than she expected from the cure itself. She went down town every day to make purchases, and was never tired of telling how she was only now beginning to understand "shopping" which was in such high favor among Englishwomen: to go from shop to shop and always to find beautiful goods and courteous people, was really a pleasure and instructive too, because one saw so much that one did not know before, perhaps not even by name. As a rule Botho took part in these little trips and excursions, and before the beginning of the last week in June, half of the Rienäckers' dwelling was turned into a little exhibition of traveller's conveniences: a brass-bound travelling trunk, which Botho, not without some show of justice, called the coffin of his property—this took the lead, then came two smaller ones of Russia leather, with satchels, rugs, and cushions, and the travelling wardrobe lay spread out over the sofa with a dust cloak over all and a pair of marvellous thick-soled laced boots, as if a trip to the glaciers were in question.

June 24th, midsummer day was set for the beginning of the journey, but the day before Katherine wanted the intimate circle to be gathered around her once more, and so Wedell and young Osten, and naturally Pitt and Serge too, were invited for a comparatively early hour. Also Katherine's special favorite Balafré, who had as a "Halber-Städter" taken part in the great cavalry attack at Mars la Tour, and who still deserved his nickname because of a great sabre cut across his brow and cheek, a souvenir of that battle.

Katherine sat between Wedell and Balafré and did not look as if she were in need of the Schlangenbad or any other water cure in the world. She had color, laughed, asked a hundred questions and when the person of whom she had asked the question started to speak, she contented herself with a minimum in the way of reply. In fact she led the conversation, and no one was offended with her, because she was a past mistress in the art of pleasing small talk. Balafré asked how she pictured her life at the water cure. Schlangenbad was renowned not only for its wonderful cures but also for its monotony, and four weeks of monotony at a health resort would be a good deal even under the most favorable circumstances.

"Oh, dear Balafré," said Katherine, "you ought not to frighten me, and you would not if you knew how much Botho has done for me. He has got me eight novels though, to be sure, he put them in the bottom layer of my trunk; and in order that my imagination should not be prejudiced against water cures, he put in also a book about scientific fish culture."

Balafré laughed.

"Yes, you laugh, my dear friend, and yet you know only the lesser half, for the larger half (Botho, you know, never does anything without weighty reason) is his motives. Of course, what I just said about the pamphlet on fish culture being meant to prevent my taking a prejudice against the water cure was only a joke. The serious side of the matter is simply this, that I must actually read the pamphlet, and that from local patriotism, for Neumark, your happy home as well as mine, has been for a long time the birth and

breeding place of scientific fish culture, and if I knew nothing of this new factor of food production, so important nationally and economically, I should never dare to show myself again on the further side of the Oder in the Landsbergerkreise, much less, however in Verneuchen, at my Cousin Borne's."

Botho started to speak, but she cut him off and went on: "I know what you were going to say, that the eight novels were only put in "in case of emergency." But I think there are not likely to be any "emergencies." Only yesterday I had a letter from my sister Ina, who wrote me that Anna Grävenitz has already been there for a week. You know her, Wedell; she was a Miss Rohr, a charming blonde. We were together at old Frau Zülow's Pension, and we were even in the same class. And I remember how we both adored our divine Felix Bachmann, and even wrote verses, until good old Zülow said that she forbade any such nonsense. And Elly Winterfeld as Ina writes me, is apparently coming too. And now I say to myself, in company with two charming young women—and I myself for the third, even if I cannot be compared with the others —in such good company, I say, one must surely be able to live. Don't you think so, dear Balafré?"

The latter bowed with a grotesque air, which seemed to express his agreement with everything Katharine might say, except her assertion that any one might be her superior, but nevertheless he resumed his former list of questions: "If I might hear the details, gracious lady! The separate items, so to speak; one minute, may decide our happiness and unhappiness. And there are so many minutes in a day."

"Well, I think it will be like this. Every morning letters. Then a promenade concert and a walk with the two ladies, preferably in a secluded path. There we will sit down and read our letters aloud, for I hope we shall have received some, and we shall laugh if he writes tenderly and say "Yes, yes." And then comes the bath, and after the bath the toilette, naturally with care and enthusiasm, which in Schlangenbad may be no less amusing than in Berlin. Rather the contrary. And then we shall go to lunch and

I shall have an old general on my right and a rich manufacturer on my left. From my youth on I have had a passion for manufacturers—a passion of which I am much ashamed. For either they have invented a new kind of armor plate or laid a submarine telegraphic cable or bored a tunnel or constructed an ascending railway. And beside all this, they are rich, which I do not at all despise. And after lunch, the reading-room and coffee, with the Venetian blinds let down, so that light and shade will be chasing each other across the newspaper. And then a walk, or a drive. And perhaps, if we are fortunate, a couple of cavaliers from Frankfort or Mainz may have wandered over and they may ride beside the carriage; and I must say, my friends, that compared with Hussars, whether red or blue, you are not in the fashion, and from my military standpoint it is and remains a decided blunder, that they have doubled the Dragoon Guards, but have, so to speak, simply left the Hussars alone. And it is still more incomprehensible to me that they should be left over there. Anything so special belongs in the capital."

Botho, who began to be annoyed by his wife's great talent for conversation, tried by means of little jokes and mockeries to stem the tide of her endless prattle. But his guests were far less critical than he, indeed they grew more enthusiastic than ever over "the charming little woman," and Balafré, who was over head and ears in his admiration for Katherine, said: "Rienäcker, if you say one word more against your wife, you are a dead man. My dear lady, what in the world does your ogre of a husband want? What does he find to criticise? I can't imagine. And in the end I am forced to believe that he feels his honor as a cavalryman insulted, and if you will pardon the pun, he rumples his feathers simply because he has feathers. Rienäcker, I take my oath! If I had such a wife as you have, her lightest whim would be my law, and if she wanted to turn me into a Hussar, I would join the Hussars and make an end of it. But so much I know for certain, and I would stake my life and honor on it, if his Majesty could hear such persuasive words, the Hussars would never have another quiet hour; to-morrow morning they would be

in the quarters for moving troops at Zehlendorf, and day after to-morrow they would be marching into Berlin through the Brandenburg Gate. Oh these Sellenthins, whose health I drink, taking time by the forelock, the first, second, and third time in this one toast! Why have you not another sister, my dear lady? Why is Fräulein Ina already engaged? It is too soon and in any case it is my loss."

Katherine was delighted with these small flatteries and assured him that, in spite of the fact that Ina was now hopelessly lost to him, she would do everything for him that could possibly be done, although she knew perfectly well that he was an incorrigible bachelor and was only making pretty speeches.

Immediately afterwards, however, she dropped her badinage with Balafré and began to talk once more about her journey, and especially about how she thought her correspondence would be during her absence. She hoped, as she could not help repeating, that she should get a letter every day, for that was no more than the duty of an affectionate husband, and as for her, she would think it over, and only on the first day, she would show some sign of life at every station. This proposal was approved even by Rienäcker, and finally was but slightly altered, it being decided that at every important station she passed through, in spite of detours, as far as Cologne, she should write a card, but that she should put all the cards, whether they were few or many, in one envelope. This plan would have the advantage, that she could express herself freely about her travelling companions without any fear of post-office clerks and letter carriers.

After dinner they took their coffee on the balcony, where Katherine, after making some objections, appeared in her travelling costume: a Rembrandt hat and a dust cloak with a travelling satchel slung over her shoulder. She looked charming. Balafré was more enchanted than ever and begged her not to be too much surprised if the next morning she should find him anxiously squeezed into the corner of the coupé as an escort for the journey.

"Provided that he gets his furlough," laughed Pitt.

"Or that he deserts," added Serge, "which would

really be the first thing that would make his devotion complete."

And so they chatted for a while longer. Then they bade their hospitable host and hostess good-bye and agreed to go together as far as the bridge at Lützow Square. Here, however, they divided into two groups, and while Balafré, Wedell and Osten sauntered further along the canal, Pitt and Serge, who were going to Kroll's, went toward the Thiergarten.

"What a charming creature that Katherine is," said Serge. "Rienäcker seems rather prosaic beside her, and then he looks at her so discontentedly and so reprovingly, as if he needed to make excuses to every one for the little woman, who to a discerning eye is really cleverer than he."

Pitt kept silence.

"And what in the world does she want at Schwalbach or Schlangenbad?" Serge went on. "That does not help matters at all. And if it does, it is usually a rather peculiar sort of help."

Pitt glanced at him sidewise. "I think, Serge, that you are growing more and more Russian, or what amounts to the same thing, you are living up to your name more and more."

"But still not enough. But joking aside, my friend, I am in earnest about one thing: Rienäcker makes me angry. What has he against the charming little woman? Do you know?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"She is rather a little silly. Or if you prefer it in German, she babbles a bit. At all events too much for him."

CHAPTER XIX

BETWEEN Berlin and Potsdam Katherine was already drawing down the yellow curtains of the car windows to protect herself from the dazzling light which grew stronger and stronger. But on this same day no curtains were drawn in the little home on the Luise Bank and the forenoon sun shone brightly in at Frau Nimptsch's window and filled the whole room with light. Only the background was in shadow and here stood an old-fashioned bed with a high pile of red and white checked pillows, against which Frau Nimptsch was leaning. She was sitting up rather than lying down, because she had water on the lungs and was suffering severely from asthma. She kept turning her head toward the one open window, but still oftener toward the fireplace where no fire was burning to-day.

Lena was sitting by her, holding her hand, and when she saw that her mother kept looking in the same direction, she said: "Shall I make a fire, mother? I thought that you were lying warm in bed and it is such a hot day . . ."

The old woman did not speak, but it seemed to Lena as if she would like it. So she went and knelt down and lit a fire.

When she came back to the bed, the old woman smiled contentedly and said: "Yes, Lena, it is hot. But you know, I always want to see it. And when I do not see it, I think everything is gone and there is not a spark of life left. And there is so much trouble here. . . ."

And she pointed to her breast and heart.

"Ah, mother, you are always thinking about dying. And yet it has passed away so many times already."

"Yes, child, it has passed away often, but it must come sometime and at seventy it may come any day. I wish you would open the other window too, so that there will be more air and the fire will burn better. Just look, it isn't burning well, it smokes so . . ."

"The sun does that, it is shining right on it. . . ."

"And then give me the green drops that Frau Dörr brought me. They always help me a little."

Lena did as she was asked and when the sick woman had taken the drops, she really seemed to be a little better and easier around her heart. She propped herself up with her hands and raised herself higher, and when Lena had put another cushion behind her back, she said:

"Has Franke been here lately?"

"Yes, he was here early to-day. He always stops to inquire before he goes to the factory."

"He is a very good man."

"Yes, he is that."

"And about the Conventiclers. . . ."

"It may not be so bad. And I almost believe that he gets his good principles from them. Do you believe so?"

The old woman smiled. "No, Lena, they come from the good God. And one has them and another has not. I don't believe very much in learning and training. . . . And has not he said anything yet?"

"Yes, yesterday evening."

"And how did you answer him?"

"I told him that I would accept him, because I thought he was an honorable and trustworthy man, who would not only take care of me, but of you too. . . ."

The old woman nodded her approval.

"And," Lena went on, "when I had told him that, he took my hand and exclaimed cheerfully: 'So then, Lena, it is all settled!' But I shook my head and said, not quite so fast, because I still had something to confess to him. And when he asked what it was, I told him that I had had two love affairs: First . . . there, mother, you know all about it . . . and the first I liked very much and the other I loved dearly and still cared for him. But he was now happily married and I had never seen him again but just once, and I did not want to see him again. But, since he was so good and kind to us. I felt obliged to tell him everything, because I would not deceive anyone, and certainly not him. . . ."

"My Lord, my Lord," whimpered the old woman, while Lena was speaking.

"And directly afterwards he got up and went back to his own rooms. But I could see plainly that he was not angry. Only he would not let me go to the door with him as usual."

Frau Nimptsch was evidently anxious and uneasy, although indeed one could not tell whether the cause was what Lena had told her or the struggle for breath. But it almost seemed as if it were her breathing, for suddenly she said: "Lena, child, I am not high enough. You will have to put the song book under me too."

Lena did not contradict her, but went and got the song book. But when she brought it, her mother said: "No, not that one, that is the new one. I want the old one, the thick one with the two clasps." And when Lena came back with the thick song book, she went on: "I used to have to bring that same book to my mother too when I was not much more than a child and my mother was not yet fifty; and she suffered here too, and her great frightened eyes kept looking at me so. But when I put the Porst song book, that she had got when she was confirmed, under her, she grew perfectly quiet and fell peacefully asleep. And I want to do that too. Ah, Lena. It isn't death . . . but dying. . . . There, now. Ah, that helps me."

Lena wept softly to herself and since she now saw plainly that the good old woman's last hour was very near, she sent word to Frau Dörr, that "her mother was in a bad way and would not Frau Dörr come." She sent word back, "Yes, she would come." Toward six o'clock she arrived, bustling noisily in, for she knew nothing about being quiet, even with sick people. She tramped about the room so that everything on or near the hearth shook and rattled, and at the same time she scolded about Dörr, who was always in town when he ought to be at home, and always at home when she wished he was in Jericho. Meanwhile she took the sick woman's hand and asked Lena, "whether she had given her plenty of the drops?"

"Yes."

"How many have you given her?"

"Five . . . five every two hours."

That was not enough, Frau Dörr assured her, and after bringing to light all her medical knowledge she added: "She had let the medicine draw in the sun for a fortnight, and if one took it properly the water would go away as if it were pumped out. Old Selke at the Zoological had been just like a cask, and for more than four months he could never go to bed, but had to be propped up straight in a chair with all the windows wide open, but when he had taken the medicine for four days, it was just as if you squeezed a pig's bladder: haven't you seen how everything goes out of it and it is all soft and limp again!"

While she was telling all this, the vigorous Frau Dörr forced the sick woman to take a double dose from her thimble.

Lena, whose anxiety was only too justly redoubled by these heroic measures, took her shawl and made ready to go for a doctor. And Frau Dörr, who was not usually in favor of doctors, had nothing to say against it this time.

"Go," said she, "she can't hold out much longer. Just look here (and she pointed to the nostrils), that means death."

Lena started; but she could scarcely have reached the square in front of Michael's church, when the old woman, who had been lying in a half doze sat upright and called: "Lena . . ."

"Lena is not here."

"Who is here then?"

"I, Mother Nimptsch. I, Frau Dörr."

"Ah, Frau Dörr, that is right. Come here; sit on the footstool."

Frau Dörr, who was not accustomed to receiving orders, hung back a little, but was too good-natured not to do as she was asked. And so she sat down on the stool.

And immediately the old woman began: "I want a yellow coffin and blue trimmings. But not too much. . . ."

"Yes, Frau Nimptsch."

"And I want to be buried in the new Jacob's churchyard, behind the Rollkrug and quite far over on the road to Britz."

"Yes, Frau Nimptsch."

"And I saved up enough for all that is needed, long ago, when I was still able to save up. And it is in the top drawer. And the chemise and short gown are there and a pair of white stockings marked with N. And it is lying among the other things."

"Yes, Frau Nimptsch. Everything shall be done just as you say. And is there anything more?"

But the old woman did not seem to have heard Frau Dörr's question, and without answering, she merely folded her hands, looked up toward the ceiling with a pious and peaceful expression and prayed: "Dear Father in heaven, protect her and reward her for all that she has done for a poor old woman."

"Ah, Lena," said Frau Dörr to herself and then she added: "The good Lord will do that too, Frau Nimptsch, I know him, and I have never seen any one come to grief that was like Lena and that had such a heart and such hands as she has."

The old woman nodded and one could see that some pleasant picture was in her mind.

So the minutes passed away and when Lena came back and knocked on the door of the corridor, Frau Dörr was still sitting on the footstool and holding her old friend's hand. And only when she heard Lena knock did she lay down Frau Nimptsch's hand and go to open the door.

Lena was still out of breath. "He will be here right away. . . . He is coming at once."

But Frau Dörr only said: "Oh Lord, the doctors!" and pointed to the dead woman.

CHAPTER XX

KATHERINE'S first letter was posted in Cologne and reached Berlin the following morning, according to expectations. The accompanying address had been given by Botho himself, who, smiling and good-humored, held in his hand a rather thick-feeling letter. Three cards faintly written on both sides with a pencil had been put in the envelope, and all of them barely legible, so that Rienäcker went out on the balcony, in order better to decipher the indistinct scrawl.

"Now let us see, Katherine."

And he read:

"BRANDENBURG, a. H., 8 o'clock in the morning.

"The train, my dear Botho, stops here only three minutes, but I will make the best use I can of the time, and in case of need I will write, well or ill as it happens, when the train is in motion. I am travelling with a very charming young banker's wife, Madame Salinger, née Saling, from Vienna. When I wondered at the similarity of the names, she said: 'Yes, it looks as if I had married my own comparative.' She talks like that right straight along, and in spite of having a ten-year-old daughter (blonde; the mother is brunette) she too is going to Schlangenbad. And she is going by way of Cologne too, like me, because of a visit that she is to make there. The child has naturally a good disposition, but is not well brought up and has already broken my parasol by her constant climbing about in the railway carriage, a mishap which embarrassed her mother very much. The railroad station, where we are just now stopping (that is to say, the train is starting again this very moment), is swarming with soldiers, among them Brandenburg Cuirassiers with a name in yellow letters on their shoulder straps; apparently it was Nicholas. It looked very well. There were fusiliers there too, from the thirty-fifth, little people, who seemed to me far too small, although Uncle Osten always used to say the best fusilier was one who could not be seen with the naked eye. But I will close. The little girl, alas, is running from one window to the other as before and makes it hard for me to write. And besides she is constantly munching cakes, little pastry tarts with cherries and pistachio nuts on top. She began that long ago, between Potsdam and Werder. The mother is too weak. I would be more severe."

Botho laid the card aside and ran through the second one as well as he could. It ran:

"HANNOVER, 12-30.

"Goltz was at the Magdeburg station and told me you had written him that I was coming. How very good and kind you were once more. You are always the best and most attentive of men. Goltz has charge of the survey in the Harz Mountains now, that is, he begins July first. The train stops a quarter of an hour in Hannover, and I have made use of the time to see the place immediately around the station: regular hotels and beer-drinking places that have grown up under our government, one of which is built completely in the Gothic style. The Hannoverians call it the 'Prussian beer church,' as a fellow traveller told me, simply because of Guelphish hostility. How painful such things are! But time will mitigate this feeling also. Heaven send that it may. The child still keeps on nibbling, which begins to make me nervous. What will be the upshot of it? But the mother is really charming and has already told me *everything*. She has also been in Würzburg, with Scanzoni, about whom she is enthusiastic. Her way of confiding in me is embarrassing and almost painful. For the rest, she is, as I can only repeat, perfectly *comme il faut*. To mention just one thing, what a dressing case! In Vienna they far surpass us in such things; one can notice the older culture."

"Wonderful," laughed Botho. "When Katherine indulges in reflections on the history of civilisation, she surpasses herself. But all good things go by threes. Let us see."

And he picked up the third card.

"COLOGNE, 8 o'clock in the evening.
"Headquarters.

"I prefer to mail my cards here rather than to wait until I reach Schlangenbad, where Frau Salinger and I expect to arrive to-morrow noon. All goes well with me. The Schroffensteins are very friendly and pleasant; especially Herr Schroffenstein. By the way, not to omit anything of interest, Frau Salinger was fetched from the station by the Oppenheim's carriage. Our journey, which began so charmingly, grew somewhat burdensome and unattractive from Hamm on. The little girl had a hard time, and moreover it was her mother's fault. 'What more do you want?' as soon as the train had left the Hamm station, whereupon the child answers: 'Drops.' And it was from that very moment that things got so bad. . . . Ah, dear Botho, young or old, our wishes ought to be constantly kept under strict and conscientious control. This thought has been constantly in my mind ever since and the meeting with this charming woman was perhaps no chance occurrence in my life. How often have I heard Kluckhuhn speak in this vein. And he was right. More to-morrow.

Your
"KATHERINE."

Botho put the three cards back in the envelope and said: "Exactly like Katherine. What gift she has for small talk! And I ought to be glad that she writes as she does. But there is something lacking. It is all so trivial and comes so easily, like a mere echo of society talk. But she will change when she has duties of her own. Or perhaps she will. In any case, I will not give up the hope."

The next day there came a short letter from Schlangenbad, in which there was far, far less than in the three cards, and from this time on she wrote only twice a week and gossiped about Anna Grävenitz and Elly Winterfeld, who had actually put in an appearance, but most of all about Madame Salinger and her charming little Sarah. There were always the same asseverations and only at the close of the third week did some lessening of enthusiasm appear:

"I now think the little girl more charming than her mother. Frau Salinger indulges in such luxurious toilettes as I find scarcely appropriate, especially as there are practically no men here. And then too, I see now that her complexion is artificial; her eyebrows are certainly painted and perhaps her lips too, for they are cherry-red. But the child is perfectly natural. Whenever she sees me, she rushes up to me and kisses my hand and makes her excuses for the hundredth time about the drops, 'but it was Mamma's fault,' in which I fully agree with the child. And yet, on the other hand, there must be a mysterious streak of greediness in Sarah's nature, I might almost say something like a besetting sin (do you believe in besetting sins? I do, my dear Botho), for she cannot let sweet things alone and constantly buys wafers, not the Berlin kind that taste like buns with meringue on top, but the Karlsbad kind with sugar sprinkled over. But I will not write any more about all this. When I see you, which may be very soon—for I should like to travel with Anna Grävenitz, we should be so much more by ourselves—we will talk about it and about a great many other things too. Ah, how glad I shall be to see you and to sit on the balcony with you. After all, Berlin is the most beautiful place, and when the sun goes down behind Charlottenburg and the Grünewald, and one grows so tired and dreamy, how lovely it is! Don't you think so? And do you know what Frau Salinger told me yesterday? She said that I had grown still blonder. Well, you will see for yourself.

As always, your

"KATHERINE."

Rienäcker nodded and smiled. "Charming little woman. She writes nothing at all about her health or the effects of

the cure; I will wager that she goes out to drive and has hardly taken ten baths yet." And after saying this to himself, he gave some orders to his man servant who had just come in and then walked through the Zoological Garden and the Brandenburg gate, then under the Lindens and then to the barracks, where he was on duty until noon.

Soon after twelve o'clock, when he was at home again, and had had something to eat, and was about to make himself comfortable for a little, the servant announced "that a gentleman . . . a man (he hesitated over the word) was outside, and wished to speak with the Herr Baron."

"Who is it?"

"Gideon Franke . . . so he said."

"Franke? Strange. I never heard of him. Bring him in."

The servant went out again, while Botho repeated: "Franke . . . Gideon Franke . . . Never heard of him. I don't know him.

In a moment the visitor entered the room and bowed somewhat stiffly at the door. He wore a dark-brown coat closely buttoned up, highly polished boots and shiny black hair, which lay very thick on both temples. He wore black gloves and a spotlessly white high collar.

Botho met him with his usual courteous amiability and said: "Herr Franke?"

The latter nodded.

"How can I serve you? Let me beg you to be seated. . . . Here . . . or perhaps here. Stuffed chairs are always uncomfortable."

Franke smiled in assent and took a cane-seated chair, which Rienäcker had indicated.

"How can I serve you?" repeated Rienäcker.

"I have come to ask you a question, Herr Baron."

"It will give me pleasure to answer it, provided that I am able."

"No one could answer me better than you, Herr von Rienäcker . . . I have come, in fact, about Lena Nimptsch . . ."

Botho started back a little."

"And I want to add at once," Franke went on, "that it is nothing troublesome that has brought me here. What I wish to say, or if you will permit me, Herr Baron, to ask, will cause no inconvenience to you or to your family. I already know that your gracious lady, the Frau Baroness is away, and I carefully waited until you should be alone, or, if I may say so, until you should be a grass widower."

Botho's discriminating ear perceived that, in spite of his rather ordinary middle-class clothes, the man was frank and high-minded. This soon helped him to get over his embarrassment and he had recovered his usual calmness of manner, as he asked, across the table: "Are you a relative of Lena's? Pardon me, Herr Franke, for calling my old friend by the old name of which I am so fond."

Franke bowed and replied: "No, Herr Baron, no relative; I have not that right to speak. But my right is perhaps quite as good: I have known Lena for a year and more and I intend to marry her. She has given her consent, but on that occasion she told me of her previous life and spoke of you so affectionately, that I at once determined to ask you yourself, Herr Baron, freely and openly, what you can tell me about Lena. When I told Lena of my intention, she at first encouraged me gladly, but immediately afterwards she added, that I might as well not ask you, as you would be sure to speak too well of her."

Botho looked straight before him and found it difficult to control the beating of his heart. Finally, however, he mastered himself and said: "You are an excellent man, Herr Franke, and you want to make Lena happy. So much I can see at once, and that gives you a perfect right to an answer. I have no doubt at all as to what I ought to tell you, and I only hesitate as to how I shall tell it. The best way will be to tell you how it all began and continued and then how it came to an end."

Franke bowed once more, to show that he too agreed to this plan.

"Very well then," began Rienäcker, "it is about three years or perhaps a couple of months more, since on a boating excursion around the Liebesinsel near Treptow I had the opportunity of doing two young girls a service by

preventing their boat from capsizing. One of these two young girls was Lena, and from her manner of thanking me, I saw at once that she was different from others. She was wholly free from affectation, both then and later, a fact which I specially wish to emphasise. For no matter how merry and at times almost boisterous she may be, yet she is naturally thoughtful, serious and simple."

Botho mechanically pushed aside the tray, which was still standing on the table, smoothed the cloth and then went on: "I asked leave to escort her home, and she consented without more ado, which at that time surprised me for a moment. For I did not yet know her. But I soon saw what it meant; from her youth on she had been accustomed to act according to her own judgment, without much regard for others, and in any case without fearing their opinion."

Franke nodded.

"So we went all the long distance together and I escorted her home and was delighted with all that I saw there, with the old mother, with the fireplace by which she sat, with the garden in which the house stood, and with the modest seclusion and stillness of the place. A quarter of an hour later I took my leave, and as I was saying good-bye to Lena at the garden gate, I asked whether I might come again, and she answered the question with a simple 'Yes.' She showed no false modesty, and yet was not unwomanly. On the contrary, there was something touching in her voice and manner."

As all this came so vividly before his mind once more, Rienäcker rose, in manifest excitement and opened both halves of the balcony door, as if the room were growing too hot. Then, as he walked back and forth, he went on more rapidly: "I have scarcely anything more to add. That was about Easter and we had a whole long happy summer. Ought I to tell you about it? No. And then came life with all its serious claims. And that was what separated us."

Meanwhile Botho had sat down again and Franke, who had been busily stroking his hat all the time, said quietly to himself: "Yes, that is just how she told me about it."

"And it could not be any other way, Herr Franke. For Lena—I rejoice with all my heart to be able to say so once more—Lena does not lie, and would sooner bite her tongue off than to boast or speak falsely. She has two kinds of pride; one is to live by the work of her own hands, the other is to speak right out freely and make no false pretences and not to represent anything as more or less than it really is. "I do not need to do it and I will not do it," I have often heard her say. She certainly has a will of her own, perhaps rather more than she should have, and one who wanted to criticise her, might reproach her with being obstinate. But she only persists in what she thinks she can take the responsibility for, and she really can too, and that sort of strength of will is, I think, rather character than self-righteousness. I see by your nodding your head that we are of the same opinion, and that pleases me greatly. And now just one word more, Herr Franke. What has been, has been. If you cannot pass over it, I must respect your feeling. But if you can, I want to tell you, you will have an exceptionally good wife. For her heart is in the right place and she has a strong sense of duty and right and order."

"That is how I have always found Lena, and I believe that she will make me an uncommonly good wife, precisely as the Herr Baron says. Yes, one ought to keep the Commandments, one ought to keep them all, but yet there is a distinction, according to which commandments they are, and he who fails to keep one of them, may yet be good for something, but he who fails to keep another, even if it stands the very next one in the catechism, he is worthless and is condemned from the beginning and stands beyond the hope of grace."

Botho gazed at him in surprise and evidently did not know what to make of this solemn address. Gideon Franke however, who for his part had now gotten well started, had no longer any sense of the impression produced by his home-made opinions, and so went on in a tone that more and more suggested that of a preacher: "And he who, because of the weakness of the flesh sins against the sixth commandment, he may be forgiven if he repents and turns to

better ways, but he who breaks the seventh, sins not merely through the weakness of the flesh but through the corruption of the soul, and he who lies and deceives, or slanders and bears false witness, he is rotten to the core and is a child of darkness, and for him there is no salvation, and he is like a field in which the nettles have grown so tall that the weeds always come uppermost, no matter how much good corn may be sown. And I will live and die by that and have always found it true. Yes, Herr Baron, the important things are neatness and honesty and practicality. And in marriage it is the same. For 'honesty is the best policy,' and one's word is his word and one must be able to have confidence. But what has been, has been, and that is in the hands of God. And if I think otherwise about it, which I too respect, exactly as the Herr Baron does, then it is my place to keep away and not allow my love and inclination to get a foothold. I was in the United States for a long time, and although over there just the same as here, all is not gold that glitters, yet it is true, that there one learns to see differently and not always through the same glass. And one learns also that there are many ways to salvation and many ways to happiness. Yes, Herr Baron, there are many roads that lead to God, and there are many roads that lead to happiness, of that I feel sure in my very heart. And the one road is good and the other road is good. But every good road must be straight and open, and lie in the sun, without swamps or quicksands or will-o'-the-wisps. Truth is the main thing, and trustworthiness and honor."

With these words Franke had risen and Botho, who had politely gone to the door with him, gave him his hand.

"And now, Herr Franke, as we are bidding good-bye I will ask just one thing more: Please greet Frau Dörr from me, if you see her, and if the old friendship with her still continues, and above all give my greetings to good old Frau Nimptsch. Does she still have her gout and her days of suffering, of which she used to complain so constantly?"

"That is all over now."

"How so?" asked Botho.

"We buried her three weeks ago, Herr Baron. Just three weeks ago to-day."

"Buried her?" repeated Botho. "And where?"

"Over behind the Rollkrug, in the new Jacob's churchyard. . . . She was a good old woman. And how she did love Lena! Yes, Herr Baron, Mother Nimptsch is dead. But Frau Dörr is still living (and he laughed), and she will live a long time yet. And if she comes—it is a long way—I will give her your greeting. And I can see already how pleased she will be. You know her, Herr Baron. Oh yes, Frau Dörr . . ."

And Gideon Franke took off his hat once more and the door closed.

CHAPTER XXI

WHEN Rienäcker was alone again, he was as if benumbed by this meeting and by all that he had heard toward the close of the interview. Whenever, since his marriage, he had recalled the little house in the garden and its inmates, he had as a matter of course pictured everything in his mind just as it had been formerly, and now everything was changed and he must find his way in a completely new world: there were strangers living in the little house, if indeed it was occupied at all; there was no fire burning in the fireplace any more, at least not day in and day out, and Frau Nimptsch, who had kept up the fire, was dead and buried in the new Jacob's churchyard. All this whirled round and round in his head, and suddenly he also recalled the day when, half seriously, half in jest, he had promised the good old woman to lay a wreath of immortelles on her grave. In the restlessness that had come over him, he was very glad that he had remembered the promise and decided to fulfil it at once. "To the Rollkrug at noon and the sun reflected from the ground—a regular journey to central Africa. But the good old woman shall have her wreath."

And he took his cap and sword at once and left the house.

At the corner there was a cab stand, a small one, indeed, and so it happened that in spite of the sign: "Standing room for three cabs" there was usually nothing there but standing room or, very seldom, one cab. It was so to-day also, which in consideration of the noon hour (when all cabs are in the habit of disappearing as if the earth had swallowed them) was not particularly surprising at this cab stand which was one merely in name. Therefore Botho went further along, until, near the Von der Heydt Bridge, he met a somewhat rickety vehicle, painted light green, with a red plush seat and drawn by a white horse. The horse seemed barely able to trot and Rienäcker could not

keep from smiling rather pitifully when he thought of the "tour" that was in store for the poor beast. But as far as his eye could see, nothing better was in sight, and so he stepped up to the driver and said: "To the Rollkrug. Jacob's churchyard."

"Very good, Herr Baron."

"But we must stop somewhere on the way. I shall want to buy a wreath."

"Very good, Herr Baron."

Botho was somewhat surprised at the prompt and repeated use of his title and so he said: "Do you know me?"

"Yes, Herr Baron. Baron Rienäcker of Landgrafenstrasse. Close by the cab stand. I have often driven you before."

During this conversation Botho had got in, meaning to make himself as comfortable as possible in the corner of the plush cushioned seat, but he soon gave up that idea, for the corner was as hot as an oven.

Rienäcker had, in common with all Brandenburg noblemen, the pleasing and good-hearted trait that he preferred to talk with plain people rather than with more "cultivated" folk, and so he began at once, while they were in the half shade of the young trees along the canal: "How hot it is! Your horse cannot have been much pleased when he heard me say Rollkrug."

"Oh, Rollkrug is well enough; Rollkrug is well enough because of the woods. When he gets there and smells the pines, he is always pleased. You see, he is from the country. . . . Or perhaps it is the music too. At any rate, he always pricks up his ears."

"Indeed," said Botho. "He doesn't look to me much like dancing. . . . But where can we get the wreath then? I do not want to get to the churchyard without a wreath."

"Oh, there is plenty of time for that, Herr Baron. As soon as we get into the neighborhood of the churchyard. from the Halle Gate on and the whole length of the Pioneerstrasse."

"Yes, yes, you are quite right. I was forgetting. . . ."

"And after that, until you are close to the churchyard, there are plenty more places."

Botho smiled. "You are perhaps a Silesian?"

"Yes," said the driver. "Most of us are. But I have been here a long time now, and so I am half a true Berliner."

"And are you doing pretty well?"

"There is no use talking about 'pretty well.' Everything costs too much and one has to have always the best quality. And hay is dear. But I should do well enough, if only nothing would happen. But something is always sure to happen—to-day an axle breaks and to-morrow a horse falls down. I have another horse at home, a light bay, that used to be with the Fürstenwald Uhlans; a good horse, only he has no wind and he will not last much longer. And all of a sudden he will be gone. . . . And then the traffic police; never satisfied, you mustn't go here and you mustn't go there. And one is always having to repaint. And red plush is not to be had for nothing."

While they were chatting together, they had driven along by the canal, as far as the Halle Gate. And now a battalion of infantry with the band playing spiritedly was coming straight toward them from the Kreuzberg, and Botho, who did not wish to meet acquaintances, urged the coachman to drive faster. And they passed rapidly over the Belle-Alliance Bridge, but on the further side, Botho asked the driver to stop, because he had seen a sign on one of the first houses that read: "Artistic and Practical Florist." Three or four steps led into a shop, in the show window of which were all kinds of wreaths.

Rienäcker stepped out and went up the steps. As he entered the door, a bell rang sharply. "May I ask you to be so kind as to show me a pretty wreath?"

"A funeral wreath?"

"Yes."

The young woman in black, who, perhaps because she sold mostly funeral wreaths, looked ridiculously like one of the Fates (even the shears were not lacking), came back quickly with an evergreen wreath with white roses among the green. She apologised at once for having only white roses. White camellias were far more expensive. Botho, for his part, was satisfied, declined to have more flowers shown him and only asked whether he could not

have a wreath of immortelles in addition to the wreath of fresh flowers.

The young woman seemed rather surprised at the old-fashioned notions that this question seemed to imply, but assented and immediately brought a box containing five or six wreaths of yellow, red and white immortelles.

"Which color would you advise me to take?"

The young woman smiled: "Immortelle wreaths are quite out of fashion. Possibly in winter. . . . And then only in case . . ."

"I think I had better decide on this one at once." And Botho took the yellow wreath that lay nearest him, hung it on his arm, put the wreath of white roses with it and got quickly into his cab. Both wreaths were rather large and took up so much room on the red plush seat that Botho thought of handing them over to the driver. But he soon decided against this change, saying to himself: "If one wants to carry a wreath to old Frau Nimptsch, one must be willing to own up to the wreath. And if one is ashamed of it, he should not have promised it."

So he let the wreaths lie where they were, and almost forgot them, as the carriage immediately turned into a part of the road whose varied and here and there grotesque scenes led him aside from his former thoughts. On the right, at a distance of about five hundred paces, was a board fence, above which could be seen all sorts of booths, pavilions, and doorways decorated with lamps, and all covered with a wealth of inscriptions. Most of these were of rather recent, or even extremely recent, date, but a few of the biggest and brightest dated further back, and, although in a weather-beaten state, they had lasted over from the previous year. Among these pleasure resorts, and alternating with them, various artisans had set up their workshops, especially sculptors and stone cutters, who mostly exhibited crosses, pillars, and obelisks hereabouts, because of the numerous cemeteries. All this could not fail to strike whoever passed this way, and Rienäcker too was strangely impressed, as he read from the cab, with growing curiosity, the endless and strongly contrasted announcements and looked at the accompanying pictures. "Fräulein

Rosella, the living wonder maiden"; "Crosses and Gravestones at the Lowest Prices"; "Quick Photography, American Style"; "Russian Ball throwing, six shots for ten pfennig"; "Swedish Punch with Waffles"; "Figaro's Finest Opportunity, or the First Hairdressing Parlor in the World"; "Crosses and Gravestones at the Lowest Prices"; "Swiss Shooting Gallery":

> "Shoot ~~right~~ quick and shoot ~~right~~ well,
> Shoot and hit like William Tell."

And beneath this Tell himself with his son, his cross bow and the apple.

Finally the cab reached the end of the long board fence and at this point the road made a sharp turn toward the wood and now, breaking the stillness of noon, the rattle of guns could be heard from the shooting stands. Otherwise everything was much the same on this continuation of the street: Blondin, clad only in his tights and his medals, was balancing on the tightrope, with fireworks flashing around him, while near him various small placards announced balloon ascensions as well as the pleasures of the dance. One read: "A Sicilian Night. At two o'clock Vienna Bonbon Waltzes."

Botho, who had not seen this place for a long time, read all these placards with real interest, until after he had passed through the "wood," where he found the shade very refreshing for a few minutes, and beyond which he turned into the principal street of a populous suburb that extended as far as Rixdorf. Wagons, two and even three abreast, were passing before him, until suddenly everything came to a standstill and the traffic was blocked. "What are we stopping for?" he asked, but before the coachman could answer, Botho heard cursing and swearing from in front, and saw that the wagons had become wedged. He leaned forward and looked about with interest, true to his fondness ~~for plain~~ people, and apparently the incident would have amused rather than annoyed him, if both the load and the inscription on a wagon that had stopped in front of him had not impressed him painfully. "Broken glass bought and sold, Max Zippel, Rixdorf" was painted in big

letters on the high tailboard and a perfect mountain of pieces of glass was piled up in the body of the wagon. "Luck goes with glass" . . . And he looked at the load with distaste and felt as if the fragments were cutting all his finger tips.

But at last the wagons moved on again and the horse did his best to make up for lost time, and before long the driver stopped before a corner house, with a high roof and a projecting gable and ground floor windows so low that they were almost on a level with the street. An iron bracket projected from the gable, supporting a gilded key placed upright.

"What is that?" asked Botho.

"The Rollkrug."

"Very well. Then we are nearly there. We only have to turn up hill here. I am sorry for the horse, but there is no help for it."

The driver gave the horse a cut with the whip and they began to go up a rather steep, hilly street, on one side of which lay the old Jacob's cemetery, which was half closed up because of being over full, while across the street from the cemetery fence rose some high tenement houses.

In front of the last house stood some wandering musicians, apparently man and wife, with a horn and a harp. The woman was singing too, but the wind, which was rather strong here, blew the sound away up hill and only when Botho had gone more than ten steps beyond the poor old couple, was he able to distinguish the words and melody. It was the same song that they had sung so happily long ago on the walk to Wilmersdorf, and he sat up and looked out as if the music had called him back to the musicians. They, however, were facing another way and did not see him, but a pretty maid, who was washing windows on the gable side of the house, and who might have thought that the young officer was looking back at her, waved her chamois skin gayly at him and joined vigorously in the chorus:

"Ich denke dran, ich danke Dir mein Leben, doch Du Soldat,
Soldat denkst Du daran?"

Botho threw himself back in the cab and buried his face in his hands, while an endlessly sweet, sad feeling swept over him. But the sadness outweighed the sweetness and he could not shake it off until he had left the town behind and saw the Müggelberg on the distant horizon in the blue midday haze.

Finally they drew up before the new Jacob's graveyard.

"Shall I wait?" said the driver.

"Yes. But not here. Down by the Rollkrug. And if you see those musicians again . . . here, this is for the poor woman."

CHAPTER XXII

BOTHO entrusted himself to the guidance of an old man who was busy near the entrance gate and found Frau Nimptsch's grave well cared for: ivy vines had been planted, a pot of geraniums stood between them and a wreath of immortelles was already hanging on a little iron stand. "Ah, Lena," said Botho to himself. "Always the same. . . . I have come too late." And then he turned to the old man who was standing near and asked: "Was it a very small funeral?"

"Yes, it was very small indeed."

"Three or four?"

"Exactly four. And of course our old superintendent. He only made a prayer and the big middle-aged woman, about forty or so, who was here, cried all the time. And a young woman was here too. She comes once a week and last Sunday she brought the geranium. And she means to get a stone too, the kind that are fashionable now: a green polished one with the name and date on it."

And herewith the old man drew back with the politeness common to all who are employed about a cemetery, while Botho hung his wreath of immortelles together with Lena's, but the wreath of evergreens and white roses he laid around the pot of geraniums. And then he walked back to the entrance of the cemetery, after looking a little longer at the modest grave and thinking lovingly of good old Frau Nimptsch. The old man, who had meanwhile returned to the care of his vines, took off his cap and looked after him, and puzzled over the question, what could have brought such a fine gentleman (for after that last handshake of his, he had had no doubts as to the quality of the visitor) to the grave of an old woman. "There must be some reason for it. And he did not have the cab wait." However he could come to no conclusion, and at least to show his gratitude as best he could, he took a watering pot and filled

it and then went to Frau Nimptsch's grave and watered the ivy, which had grown rather dry in the hot sun.

Meanwhile Botho had gone back to the cab, which was waiting by the Rollkrug, got in and an hour later had once more reached the Landgrafenstrasse. The driver jumped down civilly and opened the door.

"Here," said Botho . . . and this is extra. It was half an excursion . . ."

"One might as well call it a whole one."

"I see," laughed Rienäcker. "Then I must give you a bit more?"

"It wouldn't do any harm . . . Thank you, Herr Baron."

"But now feed your horse a little better, for my sake. He is a pitiful sight."

And he nodded and ran up the steps.

There was not a sound in the house and even the servants were away, because they knew that he was usually at the club at about this time, at least during his wife's absence. "Untrustworthy people," he grumbled to himself and seemed quite provoked. Nevertheless he was glad to be alone. He did not want to see anyone and went and sat out on the balcony, to be alone with his dreams. But it was close under the awning which was down and had also a deep, drooping fringe and so he rose to put up the awning. That was better. The fresh air, which now entered freely, did him good and drawing a deep breath he stepped to the railing and looked over fields and woods to the castle tower of Charlottenburg, whose greenish copper roof shimmered in the bright afternoon sunshine.

"Behind lies Spandau," said he to himself. "And behind Spandau there is an embankment and a railroad track which runs as far as the Rhine. And on that track I see a train, with many carriages and Katherine is sitting in one of them. I wonder how she looks? Well, of course. And what is she probably talking about? A little of everything, I think: piquant tales about the baths, or about Frau Salinger's toilettes, and how it is really best in Berlin. And ought I not to be glad that she is coming home again? Such a pretty woman, so young, so happy and cheerful.

And I am glad too. But she must not come to-day. For heaven's sake, no. And yet I can believe it of her. She has not written for three days and it is quite likely that she is planning a surprise."

He followed these fancies for a while yet, but then the pictures changed and, instead of Katherine's, long past images arose again in his mind: the Dörr's garden, the walk to Wilmersdorf, the excursion to Hankel's Ablage. That had been their last beautiful day, their last happy hour. . . . "She said then that a hair would bind too tight, and so she refused and did not want to do it. And I? Why did I insist upon it? Yes, these are such mysterious powers, such affinities that come from heaven or hell and now I am bound and cannot free myself. Oh how dear and good she was that afternoon, while we were still alone and did not dream of being disturbed, and I cannot forget the picture of Lena among the grasses picking flowers here and there. I have the flowers still. But I will destroy them. Why should I keep the poor dead things, that only make me restless and might cost me what little happiness I have and disurb the peacefulness of my marriage, if ever another eye should see them."

And he rose from his seat on the balcony and passed through the whole length of the house to his workroom, which overlooked the courtyard and was very sunny in the morning, but was now in deep shadow. The coolness did him good and he went to a handsome desk which he had had ever since his bachelor days, and which had little ebony drawers decorated with various little silver garlands. In the middle, surrounded by these drawers there was a sort of temple-like structure with pillars and a pediment; this temple was meant to keep valuables in and had a secret drawer behind it, which closed with a spring. Botho pressed the spring and when the drawer sprung open, took out a small bundle of letters, tied up with a red cord, on top of which, as if put there as an afterthought, lay the flowers of which he had just been speaking. He weighed the packet in his hand and said, as he was untying the cord: "Great joy, great grief. Trials and tribulations. The old song."

He was alone and need fear no surprises. But still, fancying himself not sufficiently secure, he rose and locked the door. And only then did he take the topmost letter and read it. It was the one written the day before the walk to Wilmersdorf, and he now looked very tenderly at the words which he had formerly underlined with his pencil. "Stiehl. . . . Alléh. . . . How these poor dear little "h's" take my fancy to-day, more than all the orthography in the world. And how clear the handwriting is. And how good and at the same time how playful is what she wrote. Ah, how happily her traits were mingled. She was both reasonable and passionate. Everything that she said showed character and depth of feeling. How poor a thing is culture, and how ill it compares with genuine qualities."

He picked up the second letter and meant to read the whole correspondence from beginning to end. But it distressed him too much. "What is the use? Why should I recall to life what is dead and must remain dead? I must destroy all this and I must hope that even memory itself will fade with the reminders that awakened it."

Now that his mind was fully made up, he rose quickly from his desk, pushed the fire screen to one side and stepped to the little hearth to burn the letters. And slowly, as if he wanted to prolong the sweet sorrow, he let leaf by leaf fall on the hearth and vanish in the flames. The last thing left in his hand was the bunch of flowers and while he was thinking and pondering, a change of feeling come over him and he felt as if he must untie the strand of hair and look at each flower separately. But suddenly, as if overcome with superstitious fear, he threw the flowers after the letters.

One more flicker and all was wholly quenched and destroyed.

"Am I free now? . . . Do I want to be? I do not. It is all turned to ashes. And yet I am bound."

CHAPTER XXIII

BOTHO gazed at the ashes. "How little and yet how much." And then he replaced the handsome fire screen, in the centre of which was a copy of a Pompeian frescoed figure. A hundred times his eye had glanced at it without noticing what it really was, but to-day he saw it and said: "Minerva with her shield and spear. But her spear is resting on the ground. Perhaps that signifies peace . . . Would that it might be so." And then he rose, closed the secret drawer which had now been despoiled of its chief treasure and returned to the front of the house.

As he was passing through the long, narrow corridor, he met the cook and the housemaid who were just coming back from a walk in the Zoological Garden. As he saw them both standing there nervous and confused, he felt a movement of compassion, but he controlled it and reminded himself, although indeed somewhat ironically, "that it was high time that an example should be made." So he began, as well as he could, to play the part of Jove with his thunderbolts. Where in the world had they been? Was that the proper way to behave? Their mistress might come home any time, perhaps even to-day, and he had no desire to hand over a disorganised household to her. And the man too? "Now, I don't want to know anything about it, I will not listen; least of all to any excuses." And when he had finished his little scolding, he walked on smiling, chiefly at himself. "How easy it is to preach and how hard it is to live up to one's principles. I am a hero only in words. Am I not myself out of bounds? Have I not myself, fallen away from correct and virtuous customs? That it has been, might be tolerated, but that it still is, that is the worst."

So saying he took his former seat on the balcony and rang. His man came now, almost more nervous and

troubled than the women, but there was no longer any need, for the storm was over. "Tell the cook to get me something to eat. Well, what are you waiting for? Oh, I see now (and he laughed), there is nothing in the house. All this happens so conveniently . . . Then some tea; bring me tea, that will surely be in the house. And let them make a couple of sandwiches. Good Lord, how hungry I am. . . . And have the evening papers come yet?"

"Very good, Herr Rittmeister."

The tea table was soon served on the balcony and a bit of something to eat had also been discovered. Botho leaned back in a rocking chair and gazed thoughtfully at the little blue flame. Then he picked up his little wife's monitor, the "Fremdenblatt," and after that the "Kreuzzeitung," and looked at the last page. "Heavens, how glad Katherine will be, when she can study this last page every day fresh from the source, that is, twelve hours earlier than in Schlangenbad. And is she not right? 'Adalbert von Lichterloh, Government Referendar and Lieutenant of Reserves, and Hildegard von Lichterloh, *nee* Holtze, have the honor to announce their marriage which took place to-day.' Wonderful! And really it is fine to see how life and love goes on in the world. Weddings and christenings! And now and then a few deaths interspersed. Oh well, one does not need to read them. Katherine does not, nor I either, and only when the Vandals have lost one of their 'alten Herrn' and I see the name of my regiment among the death notices do I read it; that interests me and it always seems to me as if the old camp at Hofbräu were invited to Walhalla. Spatenbräu is still more suitable."

He laid the paper aside, because the bell rung . . . "Can she really . . ." No, it was nothing but a bill of fare of soups sent up by the landlord with a charge of fifty pfennigs. But for all that he was much disturbed all the evening, because he constantly imagined the possibility of a surprise, and whenever he saw a cab with a trunk in front and a ladies travelling hat on the back seat turning into the Landgrafenstrasse, he would exclaim to himself: "That is she; she loves such doings and I can already hear her saying: I thought it would be so funny, Botho."

However, Katherine did not come. A letter from her came next morning instead, in which she said that she should return on the third day after the date of the letter. "She wanted to travel with Frau Salinger again, for, take it for all in all, she was a very nice woman, with many pleasant traits, a great deal of style and also knew how to travel very comfortably."

Botho laid down the letter and for the moment was sincerely pleased at the thought of seeing his pretty young wife within three days. "There is room in the human heart for all sorts of contradictions. . . . She talks nonsense, certainly, but even a foolish young wife is better than none at all."

Then he called the servants and told them that their mistress was coming back in three days; they must have everything in order and polish all the locks and other brasses. And there must be no fly specks on the big mirror.

Having given these housekeeping orders beforehand, he went to the barracks for his period of service there. "If anyone asks, I shall be back at five."

His programme for the intervening time was, that until noon he would be on the parade ground, then ride for a couple of hours and after his ride dine at the club. If he did not find anyone else there, he would at least find Balafré, which implied two-handed whist and a wealth of true or untrue stories of the Court. For Balafré, however trustworthy he was, made it a principle to set aside one hour of the day for humbug and exaggeration. Indeed, with him, this activity took the lead among the pleasures of the mind.

And the programme was carried out just as it was planned. The big clock at the barracks was striking twelve as he sprung into the saddle and after he had passed the "Lindens" and immediately after the Luisenstrasse, he at last turned into a road that ran along beside the canal and further on ran in the direction of Plötzensee. As he rode along, he recalled the day when he had ridden here before, to gain courage for his parting with Lena, for the parting that had been so hard for him and that still had to be.

That was three years ago. And what had there been for him in the meantime? Much happiness, certainly. But it had been no real happiness. A sugar plum, not much more. And who can live on sweets alone!

He was still brooding over these thoughts, when he saw two comrades coming along a bridle path from the woods towards the canal. They were Uhlans, as he could plainly see even from a distance by their "Czaplas." But who were they? To be sure, he could not remain long in doubt and before they had approached within a hundred paces, Botho saw that they were the Rexins, cousins, and both from the same regiment.

"Ah, Rienäcker," said the elder. "Where are you going?"

"As far as the sky is blue."

"That is too far for me."

"Well, then, as far as Saatwinkel."

"That is worth thinking of. I believe I will join the party, that is, provided that I do not intrude. . . . Kurt (and as he spoke he turned to his younger companion), I beg your pardon. But I want to speak with Rienäcker. And under the circumstances . . ."

"You would rather speak with him privately. Just as you prefer, Bozel," and Kurt von Rexin touched his hat and rode on. The cousin who had been addressed as Bozel, however, turned his horse around, took the left side of Rienäcker, who was far above him in rank and said: "Very well then, to Saatwinkel. We shall take care not to ride into the Tegeler rifle range."

"At all events I shall try to avoid it," replied Rienäcker, "first for my own sake and second for yours. And third and last because of Henrietta. What would that interesting brunette say, if her Bogislaw should be shot and killed and that too by some friend?"

"That would indeed give her a heartache," answered Rexin, "and would also strike out one item in the reckoning between her and me."

"What reckoning do you mean?"

"That is the very point, Rienäcker, about which I wanted to consult you."

"To consult me? And about what point?"

"You ought to be able to guess it. It is not difficult. Naturally I mean an affair, an affair of my own."

"An affair!" laughed Botho. "Why, I am at your service, Rexin. But, to be frank with you, I hardly know just what leads you to confide in me. I am not a remarkable fount of wisdom in any direction, least of all in this. And then, too, we have quite different authorities. One of these you know very well. And moreover he is a special friend of yours and of your cousin's."

"Balafré?"

"Yes."

Rexin felt that there was something like reluctance or refusal in these words and stopped talking with some air of finality. But that was more than Botho had meant, and so he led on a little further. "Affairs. Pardon me, Rexin, there are so many affairs."

"Certainly. But however many there are, they are all different."

Botho shrugged his shoulders and smiled. But Rexin, evidently not meaning to be stopped the second time through his own sensitiveness, only repeated in an indifferent tone: "Yes, however many there are, yet they are different. And I wonder, Rienäcker, that you should be the one to shrug your shoulders. I really thought . . ."

"Well, then, out with it."

"So I will."

And after a while Rexin went on: "I have been through the University, and have served with the Uhlans, and before that (you know I joined them rather late) I was at Bonn and Göttingen and I need no instruction and advice when the case is a usual one. But when I examine myself carefully, I find that in my case the affair is not usual but exceptional."

"Everyone thinks that."

"To speak plainly, I feel myself engaged, and more than that, I love Henrietta, or to show you my feeling more plainly, I love my dark Yetta. Yes, this importunate pet name with its suggestion of the canteen suits me best, because I want to avoid all solemn airs in this connection. I feel sufficiently in earnest and just because I am in

earnest, I feel no need of anything like pompous or artificial forms of speech. They only weaken the expression."

Botho nodded in agreement and refrained from every sign of derision or superiority, such as he had shown at first.

"Yetta," Rexin went on, "is not descended from a line of angels nor is she one herself. But where can you find one who is? In our own sphere? Absurd. All these distinctions are purely artificial and the most artificial are to be found in the realm of virtue. Naturally, virtue and other such fine things do exist, but innocence and virtue are like Bismarck and Moltke, that is, they are rare. I have observed very carefully her life and conduct, I believe her to be genuine and I intend to act accordingly as far as possible. And now listen, Rienäcker. If, instead of riding beside this tiresome canal, as straight and monotonous as the forms and formulas of our society, I say, if we were now riding by the Sacramento instead of beside this wretched ditch, and if we had the diggings before us instead of the Tegeler shooting range, I would marry Yetta at once. I cannot live without her. She has bewitched me, and her simplicity, modesty and genuine love have more weight with me than ten countesses. But it is impossible. I cannot treat my parents so, and besides, I cannot leave the service at twenty-seven years of age, to become a cowboy in Texas or a waiter on a Mississippi steamer. Therefore the middle way. . . ."

"And what do you mean by that?"

"A union without formal sanction."

"You mean a marriage without marriage."

"If you like, yes. The mere word means nothing to me, just as little as legalisation, sanctification, or whatever else such things may be called; I am a bit touched with nihilism and have no real faith in the blessing of the church. But, to cut a long story short, I am in favor of monogamy, not on moral grounds, but because I cannot help it, and because of my own inborn nature. All relations are repugnant to me, where beginning and breaking off may happen within the same hour, so to speak. And if I just now called myself a nihilist, I may with still more justice call myself a Philistine. I long for simple forms, for a quiet, natural way of

living, where heart speaks to heart and where one has the best that there is, faithfulness, love and freedom."

"Freedom!" repeated Botho.

"Yes, Rienäcker. But since I well know that dangers may lurk here too and that the joy of freedom, perhaps all freedom, is a two-edged sword, that can wound, one never knows how, I wanted to ask you."

"And I will answer you," said Rienäcker, who was growing more and more serious, as these confidences recalled his own life, both past and present, to his mind. "Yes, Rexin, I will answer you as well as I can, and I believe that I am able to answer you. And so I implore you, keep out of all that. In such a relation as you are planning for, only two things are possible, and the one is fully as bad as the other. If you play the true and faithful lover, or what amounts to the same thing, if you break entirely with your position and birth and the customs of your class, sooner or later, if you do not go to pieces altogether, you will become a horror and a burden to yourself; but if things do not go that way, and if, as is more common, you make your peace, after a year or more, with your family and with the social order, then there is sorrow for the tie must be loosened which has been knit and strengthened by happiness, and alas, what means still more, by unhappiness and pain and distress. And that hurts dreadfully."

Rexin looked as if he were about to answer, but Botho did not notice him and went on: "My dear Rexin, a short time ago you were speaking, in a way that might serve as a model of decorous expression, of relations 'where beginning and breaking off may happen within the same hour,' but these relations, which are really none at all, are not the worst. The worst are those, to quote you once more, which keep to the 'middle course.' I warn you, beware of this middle course, beware of half-way measures. What you think is gain is bankruptcy, and what seems to you a harbor means shipwreck. That way leads to no good, even if to outward appearances all runs smoothly and no curse is pronounced and scarcely a gentle reproach is uttered. And there is no other way. For everything brings its own natural consequences, we must remember that. Nothing that

has happened can be undone, and an image that has once been engraved in the soul, never wholly fades out again, never completely disappears. Memory remains and comparisons will arise in the mind. And so once more, my friend, give up your intention or else the whole course of your life will be disturbed and you will never again win your way through to clearness and light. Many things may be permitted, but not those that involve the soul, not those that entangle the heart, even if it is only your own."

don't entangle the heart

CHAPTER XXIV

A TELEGRAM sent just as Katherine was on the point of departure arrived on the third day: "I shall arrive this evening. K."

And she actually arrived. Botho was at the station and was presented to Frau Salinger, who declined all thanks for her good companionship during the journey, and kept repeating how fortunate she had been, and above all how fortunate he must be in having such a charming young wife. "Look here, Herr Baron, if I were so fortunate as to be her husband, I would never part from such a wife even for three days." And then she began to complain of men in general, but in the same breath she added an urgent invitation to Vienna. "We have a nice little house less than an hour from Vienna, and a couple of saddle horses and a good table. In Prussia you have schools and in Vienna we have cooking. And I don't know which I prefer."

"I know," said Katherine, "and I think Botho does too."

Hereupon they separated and our young couple got into an open carriage, after having given orders for sending the baggage home.

Katherine leaned back and put her little feet up on the back seat, on which lay a gigantic bouquet, a parting attention from the Schlangenbad landlady who was perfectly delighted with the charming lady from Berlin. Katherine took Botho's arm and clung to him caressingly, but only for a few moments, then she sat up again and said, as she held the great bouquet in place with her parasol: "It is really charming here, so many people and the river so crowded with boats that they can scarcely find their way in or out. And so little dust. I think it is really a blessing, that they sprinkle now and everything is drenched with water; of course one had better not wear long dresses. And only look at the baker's wagon with the dog harnessed in. Isn't he

too comical? Only the canal. . . . I don't know, it is still just about the same. . . ."

"Yes," laughed Botho, "it is just about the same. Four weeks of July heat have not managed to improve it."

As they were passing under some young trees, Katherine plucked a linden leaf, placed it over the hollow of her hand and struck it so that it made a popping sound. "We always used to do that at home. And at Schlangenbad, when we had nothing better to do, we would pop leaves and do all sorts of little tricks that we used to do when we were children. Can you imagine it, I really care a great deal for such foolish little things and yet I am quite old and have finished with them."

"But, Katherine. . . ."

"Yes, yes, a regular matron, you will see. . . . But just look, Botho, there is the rail fence again and the old alehouse with the comical and rather improper name, that we used to laugh at so heartily at boarding-school. I thought the place was gone long ago. But the Berliners will not let anything of that sort go, a place like that will always keep on; all that is needed is a queer name, that amuses people."

Botho vacillated between pleasure over Katherine's return and fleeting moments of discontent. "I find you a good deal changed, Katherine."

"Certainly I am. And why should I be changed? I was not sent to Schlangenbad to change, at least not my character and conversation. And whether I have changed in some other ways, *mon cher ami, nous verrons.*"

"Quite matronly now?"

She held her hand over his mouth and pushed back her veil, which had fallen half over her face, and directly afterwards they passed the Potsdam railway viaduct, over the iron framework of which an express train was just rushing. It made both a thundering and a trembling and when they had left the bridge behind, Katherine said: "It is always disagreeable to me to be directly under it."

"But it is no better for those who are up there."

"Perhaps not. But it is all in the idea. Ideas always have so much influence. Don't you think so too?" And she sighed, as if some dreadful thing that had taken a terrible

hold upon her life had suddenly come before her mind. But then she went on: "In England, so Mr. Armstrong, an acquaintance at the baths, told me (I must tell you more about him, besides he married an Alvensleben)—in England, he said, they bury the dead fifteen feet deep. Now fifteen feet deep is no worse than five feet, but I felt distinctly, while he was telling me about it, how the clay, for that is the correct English word, must weigh like a ton on the breast. For in England they have a very heavy clay soil."

"Did you say Armstrong. . . . There was an Armstrong in the Baden Dragoons."

"A cousin of his. They are all cousins, the same as with us. I am glad that I can describe him to you with all his little peculiarities. A regular cavalier with his mustache turned up, and he really went a little too far with that. He looked very comical, with those twisted ends, which he was always twisting more."

In about ten minutes the carriage drew up before the door and Botho gave her his arm and led her in. A garland hung over the large door of the corridor and a tablet with the inscription "Willkommen" ("Welcome"), from which, alas, one "l" was wanting, hung somewhat crookedly from the garland. Katherine looked up, read it and laughed.

"Willkommen! But only with one 'l,' that is to say, only half. Dear me. An 'L' is the letter for Love, too. Well then, you too shall have only half of everything."

And so she walked through the door into the corridor, where the cook and housemaid were already standing waiting to kiss her hand.

"Good day, Bertha; good day, Minette. Yes, children, here I am again. Well, how do you think I look? Have I improved?" And before the maids could answer, which indeed she was not expecting, she went on: "But you have both improved. Especially you, Minette, you have really grown quite stout."

Minette was embarrassed and looked straight before her, and Katherine added goodnaturedly: "I mean only here around your chin and neck."

Meantime the man servant came in also. "Why, Orth, I was growing anxious about you. The Lord be praised, there

was no need; you are none the worse for wear, only a trifle pale. But the heat causes that. And still the same freckles."

"Yes, gracious lady, they stay."

"Well, that is right. Always fast color."

While this talk was in progress she had reached her bedroom, where Botho and Minette followed her, while the other two retired to their kitchen.

"Now, Minette, help me. My cloak first. And now take my hat. But be careful, or else we shall never know how to get rid of the dust. And now tell Orth to set the table out on the balcony. I have not eaten a bite all day, because I wanted everything to taste good here at home. And now go, my dear girl; go Minette."

Minette hastened to leave the room, while Katherine remained standing before the tall glass and arranged her hair which was in some disorder. At the same time she looked at Botho in the glass, for he was standing near her and looking at his pretty young wife.

"Now, Botho," said she with playful coquetry and without turning around to look at him.

And her affectionate coquetry was cleverly enough calculated so that he embraced her while she gave herself up to his caresses. He put his arms around her waist and lifted her up in the air. "Katherine, my little doll, my dear little doll."

"A doll, a dear little doll. I ought to be angry at that, Botho. For one plays with dolls. But I am not angry, on the contrary. Dolls are usually loved best and treated best. And that is what I like."

CHAPTER XXV

IT was a glorious morning, the sky was half clouded and in the gentle west wind the young couple sat on the balcony, while Minette was clearing the coffee table, and looked over toward the Zoological Garden where the gay cupolas of the elephant houses shone softly in the dim morning light.

"I really know nothing yet about your experiences," said Botho. "You went right to sleep, and sleep is sacred to me. But now I want to hear all about it. Tell me."

"Oh yes, tell you; what shall I tell you? I wrote you so many letters that you must know Anna Grävenitz and Frau Salinger quite as well as I do, or perhaps still better, for among other things I wrote more than I knew myself."

"Perhaps. But you always said, 'More about this when we meet.' And that time has now come, or do you want me to think you are keeping something from me? I know actually nothing at all about your excursions and yet you were in Wiesbaden. You said indeed that there were only colonels and old generals in Weisbaden, but there are Englishmen there too. And speaking of Englishmen reminds me of your Scotchman, about whom you were going to tell me. Let me see, what was his name?"

"Armstrong; Mr. Armstrong. He certainly was a delightful man, and I cannot understand his wife, an Alvensleben, as I think I told you before, who was always embarrassed whenever he spoke. And yet he was a perfect gentleman, who always respected himself, even when he let himself go and showed a certain nonchalance. At such moments, gentlemen are always the most easily recognised. Don't you agree with me? He wore a blue necktie and a yellow summer suit, and he looked as if he had been sewed into it, and Anna Grävenitz always used to say: 'There comes the penholder.' And he always carried a big, open umbrella, a habit he had formed in India. For he was an

officer in a Scotch regiment, that had been stationed a long time in Madras or Bombay, or perhaps it may have been Delhi. But any way it is all the same. And what had he not been through! His conversation was charming, even if sometimes one hardly knew how to take it."

"So he was too forward? Insolent?"

"I beg your pardon, Botho, how can you speak so? Such a man as he; ~~a cavalier~~ *comme il faut* I will give you an example of his style of conversation. Opposite us sat an old lady, the wife of General von Wedell, and Anna Grävenitz asked her (I believe it was the anniversary of Königgratz), whether it was true that thirty-three Wedells fell in the seven years' war? Old Frau von Wedell said that it was quite true, and added that there had really been more. All who were present, were astonished at so great a number, excepting Mr. Armstrong, and when I playfully took him to task, he said that he could not get excited over such small numbers. 'Small numbers!' I interrupted him, but he laughed and added, for the sake of refuting me, that one hundred and thirty-three of the Armstrongs had perished in the various wars and feuds of their clan. And when Frau von Wedell at first refused to believe this, but finally (as Mr. A. stuck to his story) asked eagerly, whether the whole hundred and thirty-three had really 'fallen'? he replied 'No, my dear lady, not exactly fallen. Most of them were hung as horse thieves by the English, who were then our enemies.' And when everybody was horrified over this unsuitable, one might almost say embarrassing tale of hanging, he swore that 'we were wrong to be offended by any such a thing, for times and opinions ~~had changed~~ and as far as his own immediate family were concerned, they regarded their heroic forbears with pride. The Scottish method of warfare for three hundred years had consisted of cattle lifting and horse stealing. Different lands, different customs,' and he could not see any great difference between stealing land and stealing cattle."

"He is a Guelph in disguise," said Botho, "but there is a good deal to say for his view."

"Surely. And I was ~~always on his side~~ when he made such statements. Oh, he would make you die of laughter. He used to say that one should not take anything seriously,

it did not pay, and fishing was the only serious occupation. He would occasionally go fishing for a fortnight on Loch Ness or Loch Lochy—only think what funny names they have in Scotland—and he would sleep in the boat, and when the sun rose, there he was again; and when the fortnight was ended, he would moult and his whole sunburnt skin would come off and then he would have a skin like a baby. And he did all this through vanity, for a smooth, even color is really the best thing that one can have. And as he said this, he looked at me in such a way, that I did not know how to answer for a moment. Oh, you men! But yet from the beginning I really had a warm attachment for him and took no offence at his way of talking, which sometimes pursued one subject for some time, but far, far oftener shifted constantly here and there. One of his favorite sayings was: 'I cannot bear to have one dish stay on the table a whole hour; if only it is not always the same, I am much better pleased when the courses are changed rapidly.' And so he was always jumping from the hundreds into the thousands."

"Then you must have met on common ground," laughed Botho.

"So we did. And we mean to write to each other, in the same style in which we used to talk; we agreed on that as we were saying good-bye. Our men, even your friends, are always so thoroughgoing. And you are the most thoroughgoing of all, which sometimes annoys me and puts me quite out of patience. And you must promise me that you will be more like Mr. Armstrong and try to talk a little more simply and amusingly and a little faster and not always on the same subject."

Botho promised to amend his ways, and as Katherine, who loved superlatives, after describing a phenomenally rich American, an absolutely albino Swede with rabbit's eyes, and a fascinating Spanish beauty—had closed with an afternoon excursion to Limburg, Oranienstein and Nassau, and had described to her husband in turn the crypt, the cadets' training school and the water-cure establishment, she suddenly pointed to the towers of the castle at Charlottenburg and said: "Do you know, Botho, we must go there to-day or to Westend or to Hallensee. The Berlin air is rather heavy

and there is none of the breath of God in it, as there is in the country where the poets so justly praise it. And when one has just come back fresh from nature, as I have, one has learned to love once more what I might call purity and innocence. Ah, Botho, what a treasure an innocent heart is. I have fully determined to keep my heart pure. And you must help me. Yes, you must promise me. No, not that way; you must kiss me three times on my forehead like a bride. I want no tenderness, I want a kiss of consecration . . . And if we take lunch, a warm dish, of course, we can get out there at about three."

And so they went on their excursion and although the air of Charlottenburg was still less like the breath of God than the Berlin air, yet Katherine was fully determined to stay in the castle park and to give up Hallensee. Westend was so tiresome and Hallensee was half a journey further, almost as far as Schlangenbad. But in the castle park one could see the mausoleum, where the blue lights were always so strangely moving, indeed she might say it was as if a bit of heaven had fallen into one's soul. That produced a thoughtful mood and led to pious reflections. And even if it were not for the mausoleum, still there was the bridge where you could see the carp, the bridge with the bell on it, and if a great big mossy carp came swimming by, it always seemed to her as if it were a crocodile. And perhaps there might be a woman there with round cakes and wafers, and one might buy some and so, in a small way, do a good work. She said a "good work" on purpose and avoided the word Christian, for Frau Salinger was always charitable.

And everything went according to the programme, and when the carps had been fed they both walked further into the park until they reached the Belvedere with its rococo figures and its historical associations. Katherine knew nothing of these associations and Botho therefore took occasion to tell her of the ghosts of the departed Emperor and Electors whom General van Bischofswerder caused to appear at this very place in order to arouse King Frederick William the Second from his lethargy, or what amounted

to the same thing, to get him out of the hands of his lady love and bring him back to the path of virtue.

"And did it do any good?" asked Katherine.

"No."

"What a pity! Anything like that always moves me so painfully. And if I consider that the unhappy prince (for he must have been unhappy) was the father-in-law of Queen Luise then my heart bleeds. How she must have suffered! I can never rightly imagine such things in our Prussia. And you say Bischofswerder was the name of the general who caused the ghosts to appear?"

"Yes. At court they called him the tree toad."

"Because he brought on changes of weather?"

"No, because he wore a green coat."

"Oh, that is too comical! . . . The tree toad!"

CHAPTER XXVI

AS the sun was setting the young couple reached home, and after Katherine had given her hat and cloak to Minette and had ordered tea, she followed Botho into his room, because she thought it fitting to spend the whole of the first day after her journey in his company, and besides she really wished to stay with him.

Botho was content, and because she was shivering, he put a cushion under her feet and spread a plaid over her. Soon afterwards he was called away, on account of some official business which required prompt attention.

The time passed and since the cushion and plaid did not quite suffice to give the requisite warmth, Katherine rang and asked the servant to bring a couple of pieces of wood; she was so cold.

At the same time she rose, to set the fire screen to one side, and in doing this, she saw the little heap of ashes, which still lay on the iron plate of the fire place.

At this very moment Botho came in again and was startled at what he saw. But he was immediately reassured, as Katherine pointed to the ashes and said in her most playful tone: "What does this mean, Botho. Look there, I have caught you again. Now confess. Love letters? Yes or no?"

"Of course you will believe what you choose."

"Yes or no?"

"Very well then; yes."

"That is right. Now I am satisfied. Love letters! That is too comical. But perhaps we had better burn them twice; first to ashes and then to smoke. Perhaps that will bring good luck."

And she took the pieces of wood that the servant had brought in the meantime, laid them skilfully together and started to light them with a couple of matches. The wood caught. In a moment the fire was blazing brightly and as she drew the armchair up before it and put her feet com-

fortably on the iron fender to warm them, she said: "And now I will tell you the story of the Russian, who naturally was not a Russian. But she was a very clever person. She had almond eyes, all such persons have almond eyes, and she gave out that she was at Schlangenbad for the sake of the cure. Well, one knows what that means. She had no doctor, at least no regular physician, but every day she went to Frankfort or Wiesbaden, or even to Darmstadt, and she always had an escort. And some even said that it was not always the same one. And you just ought to have seen her toilettes and her conceited airs! She would scarcely bow to anyone when she came to the table d'hôte with her chaperon. For she had a chaperon—that is always the first requisite for such ladies. And we called her 'the Pompadour,' I mean the Russian, and she knew that we called her that too. And the general's wife, old Frau von Wedell, who was entirely on our side and was quite indignant over this doubtful person (for she was a *person*, there could be no doubt about that)—Frau Wedell, I say, said right out loud across the table: 'Yes, ladies, the fashions change in everything even in pockets large and small and in purses long and short. When I was young, there were still Pompadours, but now there are no longer any Pompadours. Is not that so? There are no longer any Pompadours?' And as she said this we all laughed and looked at the Pompadour. But the shocking person won a victory over us for all that for she said in a loud, sharp tone (old Frau von Wedell was rather deaf) 'Yes, Frau Generalin, it is exactly as you say. Only it is strange, that as the Pompadours went out reticules came in, and presently they were called Ridicules and such Ridicules we still have.' And as she spoke she looked at good old Frau von Wedell, who, since she could not answer, rose from the table and left the room. And now I should like to ask you, what have you to say to this? What do you think of such impertinence? . . . But, Botho, you are not saying anything. You are not listening. . . ."

"Oh yes, I am, Katherine. . . ."

Three weeks later there was a wedding in Jacob's church, the cloister-like court in front of which was filled with a

large and curious crowd, mostly workingmen's wives, some of them with children on their arms. But there were some school children and street children among them too. A number of carriages drove up, from one of the first of which a couple alighted, who were accompanied by laughter and comments, as long as they were in sight.

"Such a figure!" said one of the women who stood nearest.

"Figure?"

"Well, her hips."

"They are more like the sides of a whale."

"That is right."

And doubtless this conversation would have continued longer, had not the bride's carriage driven up just at this moment. The servant sprang down from the box and hastened to open the door, but the bridegroom himself, a thin man in a tall hat and high pointed collar, was quicker than he and gave his hand to his bride, a very pretty girl, who, as is usually the case with brides was less admired for her beauty than for her white satin dress. Then both walked up the few stone steps which were covered with a somewhat worn carpet then over the court and directly afterwards through the church door. All eyes followed them.

"And she has no wreath?" said the same woman whose critical eye had shortly before looked so severely at Frau Dörr's figure.

"Wreath? . . . Wreath? . . . Didn't you know then? . . . Haven't you heard anything whispered about?"

"Oh, so that is it. Of course I have. But, my dear Kornatzki, if everybody paid attention to rumors there would be no more wreaths and Schmidt on the Friedrichsstrasse might as well shut up shop at once."

"Yes, yes," laughed Kornatzki, "so he might. And after all, for such an old man! At least fifty years have gone over his head and he looks as if he might be going to celebrate his silver wedding at the same time."

"Yes indeed. That is just how he looked. And did you see his old-fashioned high collar? I never saw anything like it."

"Well, he could use it to kill her with, if there are any more rumors."

"Yes, he can do that."

And so the talk ran on a little longer, while the organ prelude could already be heard from the church.

The next morning Rienäcker and Katherine were sitting at breakfast, this time in Botho's workroom, both windows of which stood wide open to let in the air and light. Some mating swallows were flying and twittering all about the yard, and Botho, who was in the habit of giving them crumbs every morning, was just reaching for the basket again for the same purpose when the hearty laughter of his young wife, who for the last five minutes had been absorbed in her favorite newspaper, caused him to set the basket down again.

"Now, Katherine, what is it? You seem to have found something uncommonly nice."

"So I have. . . . It is simply too comical, the names that one sees! And always in the notices of weddings or engagements. Just listen. . . ."

"I am all ears."

"Gideon Franke, Master Mechanic, and Magdalena Franke, née Nimptsch respectfully beg leave to announce their marriage which took place to-day . . . Nimptsch. Can you imagine anything funnier? And then Gideon!"

Botho took the paper, but only as a means of concealing his embarrassment. Then he handed it back, and said in as careless a tone as he could muster: "What have you against Gideon, Katherine? Gideon is better than Botho."

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